

STUDY GUIDE

According to the latest research, the mortality rate was holding steady at 100%. It may not be the most pleasant thought for you, but the fact is, you are going to die. Guaranteed. What is unknown is exactly when and how. Also up for grabs is what kind of life you will live in the meantime.

One Month to Live is an invitation to completely alter the rest of your life – however many days that may include. It's about admitting that through the routines of our daily existence we can become drowsy about life, complacent, missing out on what it means to truly live. Together we'll ask this question: "If I really knew I had one month to live, what would I change?" What would be different about your relationships, your priorities, and your heart?

For many of us, if life ended in a month, we'd have a pile of regrets. Too many of us are missing opportunities, letting dreams die, relationships fade or falter, and failing to follow through on the priorities that our hearts are telling us are most important. It's time to stare those future regrets in the face and do something about them.

I hope you will enter into this experience with everything you've got. This is no "program" or a nice little sermon series over at the church. It's an invitation to let God stir your soul and shake things up so that beginning from day one of One Month to Live, you can make the rest of your life more meaningful, God honoring, and wonder-full.

The clock is ticking. Even as you read the above paragraphs, seconds passed you can never regain. God has given you a limited time on earth. What are you going to do with it? We all know if we had one month to live, we would be more authentic about who we are, and more deliberate about how we spend the time we have. What keeps you from living that way right now?

One Month to Live is here. Let's get it started.

Ethan Magness, Senior Minister First Christian Church

CONTENTS

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE
PERSONAL CHALLENGES
WEEK 1
WEEK 2
WEEK 3
WEEK 4
GROUP CHALLENGES
GROUP ROSTER
Living The Dash
Live Passionately27
Love Completely 31
Learn Humbly35
Leave Boldly 39
FAMILY FUN CHALLENGES 13

LOOKING FOR A GROUP? Below are some options at the church. We'll play the video together and then each group will go through the discussion at their table. Bring a friend or just show up!

Sundays • 11:15 am Room 104 (for everyone)

Wednesdays • 9:00 am Room 103A (for moms)

Wednesdays • 6:30 pm In the CLC

(Breakouts for men, women, co-ed, and young adults)

Children's programming provided. Contact Andrea Hodges for more information (423-722-7220, ahodges@fcc-jc.org).

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

JAMES 1:2-4

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

Take the One Month to Live challenge every day. The most important part of this is to set aside some time each day to open your Bible and read it. Each day's devotion will include a challenge for you to live out and put into action the principles of the One Month to Live lifestyle. With each devotion are a few lines for brief journaling. Use that space to create a record of this experience.

The Personal Challenge begins on page 6.

GROUP CHALLENGE

The One Month to Live challenge is too big to tackle alone. We need to be together, to inspire and encourage one another to live these thirty days like we are dying. We hope that everyone will gather together with a challenge group to participate in the group studies. Each study is designed to help you dig deep into one aspect of the One Month to Live challenge.

Here is what you will find in each study.



Each section opens with questions to help you connect your lives and experiences to the topic for the day. Use this time to share as a group, to reflect on the Daily Challenges, and to focus on the topic for each session.

The opening questions are followed by a short video segment designed to briefly introduce the topic for the night. Each video is followed by questions for reflection. Don't feel bound to answer each one. The goal is to give each person a chance to respond to the material in the video. The questions are present to assist in that conversation.

This is the foundation of each lesson. Having gathered our attention to the topic, we turn to scripture to shape our thoughts and spur us to action.

Invite many people to share in the reading of scripture. Do not pressure those who are not interested. Each reading is followed by questions to help your group understand the text. Don't be in a rush to apply the text. First focus on understanding the text.

In the study sections, there may be additional texts listed for further study. Many groups will want to read and discuss all of these texts. Some groups will not have that much time. The extra questions and texts are an invitation to study, not a requirement.



In the planning section the questions will shift from focusing on understanding the text to applying the principles being taught. Some of the questions will be for open conversation, but many will be personal exercises.

Don't be surprised if the planning section forces you to make some tough choices about how you will live. For most of us, living the One Month to Live lifestyle will require a serious re-orientation to the principles and patterns of scripture. The planning section is your opportunity to recognize what steps you will need to take to permit such a re-orientation in your life.



Each lesson ends with a specific challenge to act. Unlike the plan section, each of these is designed to be completed within the next week. These action challenges will be a concrete way for you to respond to scripture. It is in the action steps that God's word can take root in your life.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.

MATHEW 7:24-25

PERSONAL CHALLENGES

Living The Dash

MONDAY

Living the Dash

READ PSALM 90 We don't think about death very often. Periodically we are forced to confront the reality of death by painful circumstances, but other than those few times, it is an easy topic to ignore. But there is wisdom that comes from a clear look at death. Just as the psalmist asks, we all need to gain a heart of wisdom as well. If you had one month to live would you change the way you live? Would the recognition of mortality transform your priorities? This month-long challenge is an invitation to seek that wisdom now.

	TODAY'S
CF	IALLENGE

In the space provided list the top five areas that would change if you had one month to live. Be honest with yourself. Is it time management, relationships or something else? How do you want to be different after this thirty day challenge? Ask God to help you number your days so that you may gain a heart of wisdom.

TUESDAY

Now is the Time

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-6:2 "Why do today what you can put off until tomorrow?" is a motto for many people. But God has a different plan in mind for you. God has a work for you to do TODAY. Don't be fooled into thinking you can live your life 'someday.' This is your only life and the expiration date is unknown. Paul tells the Corinthians that they are called to be ambassadors for Christ. Just so there is no confusion he goes on to tell them when they are expected to do this. The time is NOW!

TODAY'S CHALLENGE

What are you putting off until 'someday?' List three things that you can move from the someday category to the 'now is the time' category. Is there a person or a place where God needs an ambassador? Can you do that today?

WEDNESDAY

Lord Willing

READ JAMES 4:13-17 Do you take the future for granted? James says that the way we talk about the future reveals something about our hearts. Humility requires that we recognize that we can't possibly know what the future holds. Today is the gift we have. Let's maximize its value.



In what ways can you adjust your vocabulary to reflect the reality that God holds the future? Spend the next thirty days speaking this way. Try it out with your family and challenge partners. When you have it down, use it everywhere. Be a linguistic ambassador for living today to the fullest.

THURSDAY

Building a Good Epitaph

READ JOHN 1:6-8 (1:19-37) John the Baptist was a "man sent from God." That is a good epitaph. John knew why he was on earth and he lived a life focused on that mission. He was not distracted by any worldly attraction. Not long after he gave his final testimony about Jesus he was put to death. John truly had only months to live.



Can you be a "Godsend" this week? What life could you touch that might lead someone to say that you were a person sent from God? Ask God to give you a glimpse of where you are being sent. Read Isaiah 6:1-8. Use those words to tell God that you are ready to go.

FRIDAY

Smooth Transition

READ PHILIPPIANS 1:19-30 Paul is in prison, on trial for his life. He does not know if he will live or die. He may have just one month to live. But he has no fear and no regrets. "To live is Christ and to die is gain." As he faces his death, all he can see is a win-win situation. As a Christian you can have that kind of confidence in your eternal destiny and in your temporal purpose. Having only one month to live can be a win-win situation.



If you were on trial for your life, or waiting to hear a pathology report, what would be your big regrets? What is left undone in your life? Choose one potential regret that you can take care of this month. Make a plan to address that regret and share that plan with a trusted friend. Ask them to check in with you in thirty days.

live Passionately

MONDAY

Live Passionately

READ EPHESIANS 2:1-10 Christians have been saved from so much. Because of Christ, you do not have to pay for your sins, or fear the fate of death. But in his letter to the Ephesians, Paul doesn't want you just to notice what you have been saved from. He wants you to notice what you have been saved for. Paul says that in the gift of salvation you have been re-made for good works that God has prepared for you to do. Living passionately is all about boldly pursuing the life for which God created you and saved you.



Do you believe that God has created you and saved you for something? Write down anything that prevents you from believing that God has a purpose for you. Are you willing to live your life according to the good works God has for you to do? What are the obstacles you face in living out God's purposes? Do you trust God to work in your life despite those obstacles?

TUESDAY

Leverage Your Assets

READ MATTHEW 25:14-30 No matter where you look, financial advice is easy to find. Good financial advice is a little harder to come by. Advice for life is the same way; ten people will give ten answers. But Jesus' advice is clear. He wants us to take the resources God has put in our hands, and put them to use for God's kingdom. You may not have money to invest, but you have resources that God can use if you will lay them on the line and risk them for God.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE	What are your assets? Is it knowledge or time? Money or experience? Do you have an extra room or an extra car? Which assets are you so afraid to lose that they are buried somewhere in your life? If you had one month to live how would you risk those assets for God's kingdom?

Pisky Service for a Mighty God WEDNESDAY

READ JUDGES 7 God's good plans come packaged with risks. Gideon was a remarkable risk taker. He had a battle strategy that would only work with God's help. That is the kind of risk taker that God needs today. When our own plans are too small, they leave no room for God to work, and God wants to work with us. So we need plans that are big enough and risky enough that God has plenty of room to work.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE	Seek God for a plan that will only work if God helps. If you can do it on your own, then your dream isn't big enough. Write down a risk that you want to take with God. What do you need from God to take that risk?

THURSDAY

The Church God Despises

READ REVELATION 3:14-22 Did you notice in the reading that the comfort of wealth led to complacency with God in the church in Laodicea? Churches that drift through the world making little difference are no use to God's kingdom. God wants passionate churches that serve the world and transform the people they encounter. Passionate churches are made one passionate person at a time. Ask God to renew your passion for God's church today.

TODÀY'S CHALLENGE	What are some obstacles that you face to living a life passionately for God? When has your life been dangerously comfortable? How can you help your church be a church with passion that runs hot for God?

Gods Incomparably Great Power **FRIDAY**

READ EPHESIANS 1:15-23 You need to know three things: the hope of your calling, the riches of being part of God's people, and the incomparable power of God for those who believe. Knowing and trusting God's power is the key to living a passionate and risky life for God. If Gideon didn't trust God's power, he could never have gone to battle, and if you do not know God's power you will never be able to live your life full-out.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE	What is an area of your life in which you need God's power? If you knew that God's power was sufficient for you what would you do differently? Talk to a trusted friend and ask for prayer and then take a step that depends on God's incomparably great power.

Love Completely

MONDAY

Love Completely

READ JOHN 13:34-35 Life is about relationships. No one sees this more clearly than those who see death fast approaching. Jesus was approaching death when he taught his followers this new commandment, "Love one another like I have loved you." The command to love others was not the new part. The new part of this is the command to love like Jesus. Jesus' love is complete love even to the point of sacrificing himself. Jesus teaches us that when we love like that, everyone will know who we follow.



What priorities get in the way of the relationships you need to value? If you had one month to live, what practical changes would you make to demonstrate that relationships matter most? Which of those changes can you put into motion this week? What relationships need an hour of your undivided attention? Write down one person that you want to start loving as Jesus loves you, AND how you plan to show that love.

TUESDAY



READ PHILIPPIANS 2:1-13 "Me first, me first," children call out as they run to the front of the line at the slide or at snack time. As we age we learn to be more guarded, but many of us never lose that attitude. But Jesus has a different strategy! Jesus' strategy calls us to love completely by placing the needs of others ahead of our own. You can do this because you can trust God to take care of your own needs.

	TODAY'S
ľ	CHALLENGE
4	
Ų	

Who have you hurt because of your "selfish ambition?" Whose needs are you called to make a priority? How can you let God work in you to accomplish God's good purposes (v. 13)?

WEDNESDAY

Delational Bailouts

READ MATTHEW 18:21-35 When a major company is in trouble with overwhelming debt they usually ask for a bailout. Our relationships need the same thing. Forgiveness is the art of offering a bailout to those who have wronged us. Some wrongs can never be set right. Unkind words can never be unsaid. The only way to repair the damage to you and the person who wronged you is to forgive the debt. This is what God has done for us and what God calls us to do for others.

	TODAY'S
	IODAIO
7	CHALLENGE
Ŋ	CHALLENGE
4	
4	

What relational debts are you owed? How would you experience freedom if you released those debts? What relational debts do you owe? Are you ready to ask for forgiveness? If you had One Month to Live who would you seek out for reconciliation? Why wait?

THURSDAY

Sprintual Whetstones

READ HEBREWS 10:19-25 Some people make us better just by being around us; others drag us down. Christians are called to sharpen each other, to "spur one another on to love and good deeds." Proverbs 27:17 reads, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another." That is the vision for how Christians should interact. Let us never forget God's call that we be spiritual whetstones for one another.



If you had one month to live who could you help sharpen with encouragement or a word of wise counsel? Are you connected with people who sharpen you or leave you dull? Discuss with a friend or with your challenge group how you could help sharpen each other.

FRIDAY

Life Savers

READ NUMBERS 16 Aaron ran into the plague to save the people. He stood between the living and the dead. You can do that today. Loving others completely includes sharing the good news about what Christ has done. It might be socially polite to avoid mentioning the truth that could save someone's life. But it is not love.



If you had one month to live, who would you need to tell about Jesus? What is stopping you? By staying silent, are you loving them completely or just doing what is easy? Pick one person you need to talk to about Jesus and commit to a friend that you will tell them in the next thirty days.



MONDAY

Learn Llumbly

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:10-16 Change and growth are hard. Trying new things and learning new things are never easy. But the alternative to growth is death. This is true in our physical bodies and in our spiritual life. Even Paul, the greatest evangelist and church planter of the first century, recognized that he had not made it to the place God wanted him to be. He wrote the letter to the church in Philippi late in his life and still he saw the need to press on and keep growing. Paul had accomplished a lot and could have rested on that, but instead he looked forward to the growth God had planned for him.



Even with one month to live there is growing to do. Don't let yourself get proud about where you are. Keep your eye on the horizon ahead of you. Write down four ways you would like to grow in God's direction. Pick one growth goal to keep in front of you during the One Month to Live challenge. Make a plan to press on toward that goal.

TUESDAY

Strength Through Trials

READ JAMES 1:2-4 Jesus promises that those who follow him will face suffering. It is a reality of this world and a specific consequence of following Jesus as the King of a new kingdom. Even when we suffer from evil that God did not cause, God can work in the context of that evil to produce good. The only question that remains is whether we will trust that God can use the trials we face to teach us perseverance which will result in maturity.

TODAY'S
CHALLENGE

What trials are you facing today? How have you chosen to respond to those trials? Are you open to learning even from your suffering? Talk to God about your suffering. God can handle a frank conversation. Ask that God will use your suffering to teach you.

WEDNESDAY



READ ACTS 18:18-28 You still have things to learn. If that sentence shocks you, then you may need to look again at the story about Apollos in the book of Acts. Even with all his credentials (which are pretty impressive) he had something to learn from two Corinthian leather workers. If he had ignored their teaching he would have missed an opportunity to serve God in a powerful way. Likewise, if we are too proud to learn from such surprising teachers, we may miss what God needs to teach us.

	TODAY'S
J	
	CHALLENGE
4	

Write down some things that you sense God wants to teach you this week. Admit before God and others that you don't have all the answers. Ask someone you trust to give you an honest appraisal if you are teachable. Do something with the answer.

THURSDAY

Be Still and Know

READ PSALM 23 God doesn't want you for anything you can do or accomplish. God wants you for you. God wants to be with you and for you to be with God. Sometimes this will mean forging into a dangerous mission and risky service. Sometimes this will mean giving away your possessions and offering up your life. But often this will mean sitting and praying, reading and talking. Even when you are not seeming to accomplish anything, you are with God and that is God's desire.

TODÀY'S CHALLENGE	Carve out an hour of silence this week. Do not bring a journal or a book. Turn off your cell-phone. Tell your plans to a friend who can hold you accountable. Spend a full hour with no agenda but to invite God to be with you. Write down your reflections here.

FRIDAY

Mind Molds

READ ROMANS 12:1-2 There is a secret to using a Jell-O mold. Those who know the secret can shape Jell-O into a visual delight. Like a Jell-O mold, our culture works to box in our thoughts and give shape to our attitudes, expectations and actions. Christians must master the secret of resisting this conformity and instead be transformed into the shape (likeness) of Jesus Christ. We do this by letting God's word renew and mold our minds.

TODÀY'S CHALLENGE	Become a critic of the Jell-O mold of your culture. Write down how you "fit in" to the world around you. Ask God to help you break free of that mold. Commit to read God's word and ask God to transform you to the standard of Jesus. (If you need a place to start, try the books of Mark or Luke.)



MONDAY

Leave Boldly

READ EPHESIANS 5:8-20 How many chances will you get? How many more times will you get to talk to your parents or play with your children? How many more conversations will you have with your friends? How many more days are you willing to waste in the sinful patterns that are so comfortable to you? If you had one month to live you would be naturally compelled to "make the most of every opportunity." You would not waste a conversation. You would not waste one moment. Imagine how boldly you could face death if you knew that you had not wasted a single breath.



Take a look at your life. From an eternal perspective, which moments are you wasting? Perhaps those moments are being wasted in sin, or by pursuing wealth and power. Perhaps they are being wasted because you are resisting God's will for your life. Write down two ways you are wasting your life. Pick one and make a plan to replace that waste with fruitful living.

TUESDAY

Pass It (In

READ PSALM 145 Being a witness requires two qualities. You must see something and you must be prepared to tell about it. One of the hallmarks of people who leave a legacy in the church is their willingness to testify how God has acted throughout history and in their lives. You can be a witness. Study scripture to see what God has done, and partner with what God is doing today so you will have a testimony to pass on to the next generation.

	TODAVIC
	TODAY'S
ľ	CHALLENGE
h	CHALLENGE

Find a way to make a difference in the next generation of Christians. This may happen in the context of your family or in new relationships that you can form. Can you name three people who could benefit if you shared a witness of what God has done in your life? Write down their names and tell them your story.

WEDNESDAY

Play to Your Strengths

READ 1 CORINTHIANS 12:1-7 God has given you skills that are designed to be used for the good of all God's people. When you withhold your gifts from the church everyone suffers. But when you contribute what you have to offer you help build a legacy of a strong healthy church. Don't worry that you can't do everything. No one can. However, you are gifted to serve and the only obstacle is your willingness to offer what you have.

TODAY'S CHALLENGE	

You can trust that God has gifted you for service to the church. Make a commitment to find out how you have been gifted to serve and then offer those gifts to God. Write down how you will offer your gifts to God's church. For ideas, go to fcc-jc.org/serve.

THURSDAY

Who is How Legacy

READ 1 TIMOTHY 1:1-2, 12-19 There are a lot of ways to leave a legacy. With enough money you can build a building or start a foundation. But there is no more important way to leave a legacy than to invest in the life of someone else. I Timothy was a letter written from the early church leader, Paul, to his legacy, Timothy. You can hear Paul's passion and concern for this young leader. Paul chose to leave a legacy.

	TODAY'S
	IUDAIS
	CHALLENGE
2	STIALLITE

Are you investing in a legacy of changed lives? Can you identify people that are your children in the faith? What can you do now so that you can leave boldly with a legacy of Christians ready to carry on the service that you are now offering?

FRIDAY

Live on the Edge

READ JOHN 10:7-10 In Christ we can have abundant life now and forever. We live life on the edge of eternity. We live now with purpose and one day we will live forever in God's kingdom. The way to live a life so that you can die with no regrets is to live as if you had one month to live. In the world, a long range plan may be 10, 50 or even 100 years. In Christ, you can have a long range plan of abundant life both today and for all eternity.

	TODAY'S
ľ	CHALLENGE

Accept the gift of abundant life that God offers. Are you ready to make a pledge to never settle for a mediocre life of postponement and regrets? Are you ready to Live Passionately, Love Completely, Learn Humbly and Leave Boldly? Don't take anything less than the eternal abundant life that God wants to give you.

GROUP CHALLENGES

And now I have a word for you who brashly announce, "Today — at the latest, tomorrow — we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money." You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing. Instead, make it a habit to say, "If the Master wills it and we're still alive, we'll do this or that."

JAMES 4:13-15

MARKS OF A GREAT GROUP

Commitment

Members of a great group commit to attending group meetings and participating fully in the One Month to Live challenge.

Courtesy

Conversations should include everyone, not just one or two of the most forceful talkers. Avoid easy answers and don't dismiss the opinions of those who disagree.

Confidentiality

Respect the privacy of those in your group. Give them the freedom to share by promising to keep everything in the group.

Inviting and Welcoming

Great groups invite others to join, even after the series has started, and they welcome new participants by "bringing them up to speed" on what has gone before. Pray for those people in your group and also pray about those who need to be.

Reproducing

Like a living organism, great groups create new life. Plan now for how your group will start new groups. If you need help developing a reproduction strategy for your group, contact Andrea Hodges on the groups team (ahodges@fcc-jc.org, 423-722-7220).

Welcome to your One Month to Live group!

Start off the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves. Then, fill out the Group Roster together. Read the "marks of a great group" on the previous page. Ask everyone: what are you hoping to get out of this time together?

Be sure to discuss a clear start and an end time for your group.

GROUP ROSTER

name	Number

Living The Dash



- What were some of your dreams for your life when you were younger? How have your dreams changed? Have your dreams improved or just settled? Share with your group one unfulfilled dream that you have for your life.
- Many of us have a clear memory of the first time we encountered death – maybe a grandparent or older relative, the parent of a friend, or even a pet. If you are able, share how your first encounter with mortality shaped your perception of life and death.
- Some people think a lot about their death, (planning a funeral, updating a will weekly, etc.) and others try to avoid all thoughts of death (barely able to apply for life insurance). Where are you on that spectrum? Why?

WATCH VIDEO SESSION 1

fcc-jc.org/onemonth

- What lifestyle choices do you and people around you make because you've forgotten you are mortal? How would these lifestyle choices be challenged by keeping focused on the priority changing question, "What would you do if you had one month to live?"
- The teaching suggests that many of us need to have our priorities reordered by the wisdom that comes from understanding our mortality. How would you re-assess your commitment to your dreams if you kept in mind that your time was short?
- We can learn a lot from the story of the rich fool. Not all stories of foolish behavior end in tragic death. Share with your group a story from your own life or from the life of someone you know about taking something or someone for granted, and how circumstances changed to show the foolishness of taking people or things for granted.



If we are going to make the most out of the life God has given us, then we will need God's wisdom for our lives and God's perspective on what really matters. As a group dig into these texts, expecting God to use them to speak into your lives.

The psalms are the prayer and worship book of God's people. Some are majestic and were meant to be sung with grand music in the public worship of the nation. Some record the private agony of great suffering and sin. In Psalm 90 we have a stark declaration of reality. In this dose of reality may we find wisdom.

READ PSALM 90

- How does the writer contrast God with humans?
- Can you relate to the pessimism of verses 5-10? When do you feel a sense of futility about the striving of our short lives?
- In the pivotal verse of the psalm the psalmist asks, "Teach us to number our days, that we may get a heart of wisdom." In Jewish thought the heart is the seat of the will and of moral character. In your own words, what is the writer asking? How is the rest of the psalm different in tone, in light of the request of verse 12?
- In verse 17 the psalmist asks the Lord to establish the work of his hands. How does this request serve as a response to the pessimism of the first half of the psalm?

Paul was an early follower of Jesus who travelled throughout the Roman empire starting churches and preaching about Jesus. As his ministry moved to new towns he would stay in touch with the churches he started by writing letters. One of the churches to which he wrote a few letters was the church of Corinth. This church was easily distracted. Internal sin, theological confusion and outside cultural influence all contributed to the troubles faced by this young church. In Paul's letter he offered advice, biblical teaching and occasionally a strong correction to bring them back on course. In this section he is reminding them of the powerful work God does for those who are in Christ and the powerful work that God wants them to do.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-6:2

- How does Paul describe the transformation that you can experience in Christ? Who has caused this new reality?
- What is the connection between what God has done for us and what God calls us to do? Is it surprising to you that God calls you to be a partner in the work of reconciliation? Discuss the role of an ambassador. What does it mean to be an ambassador for Christ?
- Paul describes the life of a Christian in a variety of ways: new creation, ministers of reconciliation, ambassadors for Christ. In verse 5:21 he describes the final consequence of the work God wants to do in your life. What is that? When does Paul want the Corinthians to get serious about God's call for their life?



According to Psalm 90 and Ecclesiastes, what we do on our own is a lot of hard work that accomplishes little, but in light of our mortality we can work with God and trust God to establish the work of our hands. When you consider your looming death, which do you feel more - the pessimism of the first half or the trust expressed in the second half of Psalm 90? If you had one month to live, what steps would you take to work for things that God could establish?

Paul wants the Corinthians to take seriously not only what God wants to do for them but also what God wants to do with them and what they are called to do on God's behalf.

- Into what community of people are you equipped to be an ambassador?
- Where can you go speak on God's behalf?
- What steps would you take to work for things that God could establish?



Paul's biggest concern for the Corinthians in this text is that they will miss the life God has for them because they are procrastinating. "Now is the time," he tells them. Make a commitment to avoid delaying what God wants to do in your life through the One Month to Live challenge. This is not a dress rehearsal. This is your real life. Make a plan to use the One Month to Live challenge as a God-given opportunity to start living the life you have always wanted.

- Though there isn't much room on a gravestone, the phrase or two written there can symbolize the most important priorities of that person.
- Think and pray about a phrase you would want for your epitaph.
 Write a copy of it in several places that you'll see frequently for the next month.

"All gravestones have etched deep into them two dates separated by a dash. The dates represent the beginning and the end, while the dash represents a lifetime... What do you want the "dash" on your gravestone to represent?"

KERRY SHOOK, ONE MONTH TO LIVE

Close your group in prayer.

ive Passionately



- What is the best (or biggest) risk you have ever taken? How did it work out? What are some of the worst risks you have ever taken?
- Have you ever found yourself in a group of people in which some were taking a risk and some were not? Which group were you in? Why? How did it all work out?
- In the past year, where in your life have you found the most joy and passion? Was it a hobby or sport? A relationship or a job? Why did this area ignite passion in your life?

WATCH VIDEO SESSION 2

fcc-jc.org/onemonth

- How would a "nothing to lose" attitude help you to live boldly? What is your biggest obstacle to living like you have nothing to lose?
- The teaching suggests that only when we risk something for God can we even tell if God has shown up to work with us. How was this true in the story of Gideon? When have you seen that happen in your life? What risk could you take for God in the future?
- How does our culture place a value on comfort and security that makes godly risk-taking difficult? How is foolish risk-taking glorified? What would it look like for Christians to be counter-cultural risk-takers who are wisely trusting God to help us do great and risky things?



The early church planter and teacher Paul wrote the Letter of Ephesians as a circular letter that was sent to many churches. In this letter he discusses the foundational truths of Christian life and practice. In one of the most important sections, he discusses what God has done for every Christian through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

READ EPHESIANS 2:1-10

- In the first seven verses of this chapter Paul uses a handful of different images to describe what God has done for us. Name as many as you can find. Paul also describes our condition before God acted. How does he describe that?
- In verses 8 and 9 Paul makes a crucial point about how we receive these great gifts from God. What is his point?
- In verse ten we reach the climax. Paul has described our condition (dead in sin), reminded us what God has done (made us alive in Christ), told us how God has done it (as a gift to those who trust God), and finally he tells us what God's purpose is. In verse ten we find out not just how we have been saved but also why. According to Eph 2:10, why have you been saved?
- How does knowing you have been saved for a purpose change your sense of responsibility?

The book of Acts tells about some of the major events and people from the early years of the church. This was a time of great success and great trial. Paul is one of the main characters in these stories. Near the end of his career he is travelling back to Jerusalem with a financial gift for the destitute Jerusalem church. He knows going there endangers his life — there is already a warrant out for his arrest. On his way to Jerusalem he stops to visit the church leaders in Ephesus. He planted this church and served the people for several years. He does three things when he meets with the church's leaders. He reminds them of the bold life that he lived in their presence. He helps them understand his confidence as he returns to Jerusalem. He calls them to serve others with the same whole hearted passion that he served them.

READ ACTS 20:13-38

- Paul is leaving a ministry that he began and he is leaving people he loves very much. Nevertheless he leaves with no regrets. According to his testimony, why is he able to leave with no regrets?
- Paul values his life we learn in another letter to the Christians in Philippi that he has no desire to die - but he does not value his life for its own sake. Why does he value his life? You can check Philippians 1:20-26 for more from Paul about why he values his life.
- Paul is taking a huge risk by going to Jerusalem. Is that risk wise or foolish? Why?
- Paul calls these elders to a no-regrets lifestyle. According to Paul, what do they need to do to lead a life that leaves behind no regrets?



One of the biggest obstacles to finishing life with no regrets is our human tendency to postpone important dreams for the future. The irony is that if we keep postponing our purpose we are guaranteed to finish life with regrets. Paul had no regrets not because he did all that he wanted, but because he did all that he could.

- What dreams are you postponing? Why?
- Few of us live as if we have nothing to lose. Paul lived that way because he trusted God to take care of what was precious to him (2 Tim 1:12). In what areas of your life do you need to trust God's love so that you can live like you have nothing to lose?
- What are you still unwilling to risk for God? What would it take to change your willingness to risk? If you had one month to live what risks would you be willing to take that right now seem too foolish?



If you died this month you probably would have many regrets: a trip never taken, a relationship still broken, a thankyou never spoken, or a friend you never told about Jesus. In the personal challenges you chose one regret to eliminate this month, so that you can say goodbye with the same confidence that Paul had. (Acts 20:25-27) Share that goal with your group or a trusted friend. Write down how you will address this regret and make a concrete plan that you can accomplish in the next 30 days.

Love Completely



- Television, movies, and novels often feature relationship dynamics as key parts of their stories. Tell your group about your favorite fictional relationship (married couple, best friends, parent-child, etc.). What do you like about it?
- Tell your group about a friend or family member with whom you are especially close. Share with your group an example that shows how meaningful this relationship is, or tell your group about an experience from early in the relationship that led to you becoming close with this person.
- First Christian Church began in 1871, just over 150 years ago. If you could spend an evening with anyone who has lived in the last 150 years, who would it be? Why?

WATCH VIDEO SESSION 3

fcc-ic.org/onemonth

- Our modern world has many ways to make to-do lists: smartphones, organizational apps, office software, online shared event planners. Some folks choose lower tech methods like Day-Timer notebooks, family calendar on the refrigerator, or Post-It notes everywhere. How do you keep track of *your* to-do list, or are you list-resistant?
- Read Romans 13:8-14. Though the Bible does speak about God's moral law, summarized in places like the Ten Commandments, referred to in verse 9, what does the writer of Romans emphasize about the law and Christian love? Share an example of how Christian love changes behavior.
- If you had one month to live, you would focus on relationships over almost everything else. What priorities get in the way of the relationships you need to value? What changes can you make this week to love completely?



Loving completely means loving like God. The early Christian leader John wrote about God's love because he witnessed the way Jesus loved people. When we first meet John, he has a "hellfire and damnation" type of personality (Luke 9:51-56), but as his life became more like Jesus, John grows to a point that Bible scholars title him "the apostle of love."

READ 1 JOHN 4:7-21

 These verses make several statements about God and love. List all these links between love and God. Is there one that is particularly meaningful to you?

Jesus taught during a time much like our own, with people hating those who looked and lived differently. Samaritans were the descendants of Jews who had intermarried with non-Jews in northern Israel. Jews considered the mixed race Samaritans to be religious traitors who blended pagan practices with true Judaism, and Samaritans felt similarly negative about Jews. As we read the story today, imagine how it would feel if instead of a Samaritan it was one of our current cultural adversaries. The priest and the Levite in Jesus' story were examples of religious leaders who should have been compassionate to their countryman, but instead ignored him.

READ LUKE 10:25-37

Jesus' audience knew the road from Jerusalem to Jericho was what today would be described as a "high crime, high risk area." Though Jesus is telling a fictional story for teaching purposes, we can use our imagination to open our eyes to similar situations in our own life.

- What are some reasons why the priest and the Levite chose not to help?
- Being a good neighbor is not limited to helping someone whose car has broken down on the road. What everyday situations in our modern culture might be similar to that of the victim in Jesus' story?

The Jewish faith from which Peter came taught that forgiving an offender three times demonstrated a forgiving spirit. Though the religious teachers based that practice on Bibles verses like Amos 1:3; 2:6; Job 33:29, 30, many other Bible verses (Psalm 41, Psalm 86, Isaiah 55:6-7) show God's desire to extend mercy and grace was not limited by numbers. When Peter talked about forgiving seven times, he was going above and beyond cultural expectations.



READ MATTHEW 18:21-35

- What is the connection between Jesus' story about the unforgiving servant and Peter's question about how many times he should forgive?
- What are some of the different, perhaps even contradictory things our culture teaches us about forgiveness?
- In your daily life, are you closer to Jesus' model of forgiveness or to one of the world's models?



Jesus' story about the Good Samaritan tells us about showing practical love to those who are very different from us. In your own life, who is someone who looks or lives very differently than you, for whom you can show love?



Sometimes it's easier to love someone you don't know well — the stranger you only meet once — than it is to love the people you live with each day. What is a specific way you can show your complete love for someone close to you, even when you don't feel like loving them?

Before your next group meeting, call, write, or meet one person you need to love completely:

- Someone you need to forgive.
- Someone you need to ask for forgiveness.
- Someone you need to tell the loving truth.
- Someone whose needs you should place before your own.

learn Humbly



- What is a skill (for work, for a hobby, around the house, etc.) that you have recently tried to learn? What prompted you to learn it? How did it go?
- More and more people use a GPS or maps app to get to where they're going. Do you use a GPS? Has it helped to avoid getting lost? Share with your group a time when you were lost what did you feel and how did you get back on track?
- Tell your group a story of someone older than you who was a meaningful positive influence on you. What is something about you that is different because of that person?

WATCH VIDEO SESSION 4

fcc-ic.org/onemonth

- Tell your group a story about a time in your life when your circumstances suddenly changed. What did you feel? What did you learn?
- Share with your group an example of someone you know who is humble. Tell a story about this person that shows his or her humility. If you had been in the situation of your humble friend, how might you have reacted?
- Sometimes difficult circumstances teach us and shape us. In Psalm 119:67-71, the writer says "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I obey your word... It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees." The New Living Translation renders verse 71, "My suffering was good for me, for it taught me to pay attention to your decrees." Discuss with your group some reasons why difficult circumstances can help us learn lessons we might usually ignore. Can you think of a time you learned something through a hard circumstance?



Before becoming a Christian, Paul spent years as a sincere Jewish scholar studying under one of the most respected rabbis of that time. After becoming a Christ follower, God's Spirit used him to plant dozens of churches while preaching in some of the biggest cities of the ancient Roman Empire. As he neared the end of his life he wrote to the Christians in the Greek city of Philippi to encourage them when they were facing tough times. Let's see what a veteran missionary says about being a life-long learner.

READ PHILIPPIANS 3:10-16

- What does Paul still want to know? Since we can safely assume that Paul knew both Jewish and Christian teaching very well, what does Paul's deep desire to learn mean for us?
- Someone who runs in a race but stops is no longer a runner—he or she is a spectator. Disciples of Jesus don't arrive, they follow—which means they continue to grow, no matter how long they've been following already.

One way we learn humbly is growing in our prayer—praying more often and praying with sincerity. Let's look at how Jesus prayed.

READ MARK 1:35, 6:46, & 14:32-39

- In what kind of situations did Jesus pray?
- In what kind of situations do you most often pray?
- What are some other times you could be praying?
- Have you ever caught yourself praying but not really meaning it? Share with your group a time in your life when you prayed with the same kind of sincerity that Jesus had in Mark 14.

Another way we learn humbly is growing in understanding and application of God's word. Paul passes along this wisdom to his protégé Timothy. Like many today, Timothy grew up with a mixed religious background. His mother and grandmother were Jewish but his father was probably Greek. Judaism looked down on mixed marriages.



READ 2 TIMOTHY 3:14-17

Did you learn about the Bible as a child, or are you getting to know it as an adult? Verse 16 summarizes the Bible's function of teaching us about right and wrong. Have you encountered a time when the Bible's teaching was different than what you believed or how you were acting?

As we humbly accept God's word planted in us (James 1:21), we can see that God works through hard times to help us learn to depend on him and keep growing forward through those hard times.

READ ROMANS 5:1-9

Paul didn't merely write about suffering, he had lived through it (2) Corinthians 11:23-28). What connection does Paul make between suffering and growing in Christian character traits? Tell your group a story from your life or the life of someone you know about learning humbly from hard times.



At First Christian Church, we talk about living the DNA of Jesus.

Love God: The things that get our first and best attention are what we end up loving the most. And we prove what's important to us by what we make a priority. Our commitment to love God begins with a commitment to Worship. We make

it a priority to show up each week, setting aside specific time to center our lives around God. From that commitment flows a desire to love God all the time.

Love everyone: We will be people who are known by our love. That's how Jesus says we are going to be recognized as his followers. Our commitment to love everyone means we find ways to serve. We step out from the sidelines and participate in the work of God.

Make disciples: Making disciples begins with being a disciple –someone who is actively seeking to become more like Jesus. While we're doing that, we make strategies to find others and point each other toward Jesus. Our commitment to making disciples leads us to commit to groups where intentional and strategic discipleship is the priority.

Tell your story: We tell the truth. That's all Jesus asks from us. We tell people what we've seen God do in our lives and invite others to open themselves up to the story God has for them. Our commitment to telling our story means we pay attention to the specific people in our lives who need hope and to whom we have unique access and relationship.

If you had only One Month to Live, what could you do in that time to take a next step in one (or more) of these aspects of our DNA?



Pick one of the DNA qualities we just discussed and propose to your group a way you could take a small step forward between now and your next group meeting. For example, in this session we talked about learning humbly, especially in the areas of prayer and Bible study. If you want to take a small step forward in prayer, what kind of tangible commitment could you make to God and to your group to grow in prayer in the coming days?

Close your group in prayer.

Jeane Boldly



- If you had one month to live, what is the most important thing that you would have to leave unfinished? Who would carry on that work after your death? What could you do during that month to prepare other people to finish your work?
- What kind of tangible arrangements have your made for your last month and afterwards: estate planning or a will, guardianship for children, etc.?
- Share with your group an example of something (school, roadway, building, etc.) in your current community named after someone who may have been important in the past, but who is unknown to you. See if anyone in the group is able to identify the person.

WATCH VIDEO SESSION 5

fcc-jc.org/onemonth

- Janet talked about revisiting places she used to live and work. Have you ever gone back to someplace you spent a significant episode of your life, and felt surprised or disappointed by the changes? Have you gone back somewhere and gotten a positive welcome: thanked and remembered for what you did?
- The Bible book of Ecclesiastes highlights the human desire to do something that will have an impact beyond our own lives. Some people consciously wonder about what will happen when they are gone, while others rarely think about it. Which category are you, or perhaps something in between? Have you ever felt the despair that the writer of Ecclesiastes expressed about the seeming meaninglessness of life? How have you come to terms with reality of death?
- Paul reminded the Christians in the Greek city of Corinth that the courage to live boldly in the face of current problems springs from confidence in the future God promises to us (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). Are you facing a trouble that doesn't seem light and momentary right now? If you truly had only One Month to Live, what is waiting for you after this life is over?



All of us will eventually face the question of wondering if our works in life matter. One of the most important ways that we work to leave a legacy is by investing in the next generation of God's people. These legacy-building relationships are a vital part of being a Christ-follower, a citizen in God's kingdom. Let's look at these texts that focus on leaving a lasting legacy.

READ PSALM 145:1-12

READ DEUTERONOMY 11:16-21

- According to these texts, what is the central legacy-building activity on which parents should focus? What insight for building a legacy can modern families learn from these texts?
- What is the context of Psalm 145? How is the multi-generational life of the church an important part of building a legacy?

Paul does not tell us much about his family situation. But from the lack of references to his wife and children we assume he was single and not a parent — yet, he still invested in building a legacy.

READ 1 TIMOTHY 1:1-2, 12-19; 6:11-21

 What do we learn about his relation with Timothy from this text? How does Paul leave a legacy that goes beyond "silent" modeling good behavior? Who has shaped your life by calling you to a higher standard of excellence? When Paul wrote his letter to the church in Philippi, his life was on the line. The verdict of this trial could lead to his death and he truly did not know what the outcome would be. This is Paul with "One Month to Live." As he faced his death his priorities did not change. He cared enough about people to reach out to them and continue to teach and encourage them. He kept doing what he had always done. Pay attention in the following section as Paul shares his perspective on life and death as his own life hangs in the balance of a pagan court.



READ PHILIPPIANS 1:12-14, 19-30

- According to verses 12-14, what immediate good has come from Paul's imprisonment? Based upon how this text ends (27-30), why do you think Paul wants them to know the good that is coming from his persecution?
- As Paul looks at his potential death, he seems to view this verdict as a winwin situation. There is an upside to dying and an upside to living. What are the upsides that he identifies? In both cases who is he focused on? How would a full recognition that Jesus Christ is Lord of life and death transform the way you live and the way you face death?
- This section ends with a pretty dark warning for Paul's readers see verse 29 and 30. Apparently some of them are truly facing one month to live. What does he want them to understand about the suffering they face? Paul hopes that hearing of his suffering will help them face theirs.



Christians are able to build a godly legacy in many ways. Deuteronomy describes how we leave a legacy in the everyday choices of our common life. Paul's legacy-building with Timothy grew as they travelled and ministered together as Paul mentored Timothy. Psalm 145 calls us to leave a legacy through worship and praise as we tell the stories of

God to the next generation of God's people. Which of these ways of building a legacy are already part of your life? How can you capitalize on that strength? How might you choose to expand beyond this skill by developing one of the other models for building a legacy?

For Paul, being able to face his death boldly centers on his trust in Christ and his commitment to Christ's Lordship. He argues that if we live now with the purposes of Christ as our top priority then we can boldly face the next life. By that standard how would you rate your life? Can you echo Paul's statement for yourself that "to live is Christ and to die is gain"?

In your life when have you been most confident that Jesus has a purpose and a mission for your life? When have you most trusted that Jesus can make a way for you to be with him forever? The One Month to Live challenge is nearly over. Take a minute to write down how you have lived differently over the last month. Which of these practices (or others that you have not adopted yet) must you continue so that you can view life and death as a win-win situation?



During the first week of this study, you studied the parable of the foolish man who planned his life as if he would live forever. In that parable, God says to this man, "You fool, You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?" (Luke 12:20)

In contrast, Paul writes to Timothy, "Yet I am not ashamed, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." (2 Timothy 1:12)

You have only one life, and you don't know how many days you have left. Make the decision to entrust every day of your life and every work of your hands into the purpose of Christ. If you do, you will have a life that matters every day, and you will face death with no regrets. And when you do find that you have only one month to live you can be one of the rare people who can say, "I wouldn't change a thing."

Close your group in prayer.

FAMILY FUN CHALLENGES

As a part of the One Month to Live series we have included five family fun time suggestions. Use these or make up your own. The important thing is to make sure that part of your "dash" is dedicated to building up your family.



Upside Down, Inside Out and Backwards

Living The Dash

Part of living the dash well is realizing that life on this earth is imperfect. Some days are good and others simply are not. Some days everything seems like a challenge, like the whole world is upside down and you are the only one right side up. A simple yet poignant lesson is available for us. Ecclesiastes 7:14 says, "When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other."

This week's family fun activity suggests you meet this "upside down world" head on by holding an "Upside Down Inside Out Dinner Party". The plan is simple: cook dinner and serve it in an upside down way. (Be creative, serve dessert first, serve food in a crazy container, eat with the wrong end of the utensils, etc). Instruct everyone to come dressed with their clothes inside out. During dinner have silly conversations by attempting to pronounce words backwards.

At some point take the opportunity to talk with your kids about how all days are not going to go their way. Help them understand that this is just the way life is. God does not cause their bad days, but lessons can certainly be learned from adversity. Whatever you do, don't forget to seize a day with your family this week. It will make your "dash" better.





Like no other sporting event, the Olympics can make a raving fan out of even the most docile person. Moms, dads, brothers and sisters can all find excitement in rooting your home country to victory. This week in our alignment series we are talking about living passionately. We should all be raving fans for Jesus, our church and our families.

Beyond the fans, the Olympic competitors themselves certainly exhibit their own brand of passion for their sport. This week's family activity invites you to host your own Family Olympics. To get you started we have provided four event suggestions, but each family is encouraged to come up with your own. Make them as silly or as competitive as you wish to match your family dynamic. The point is have fun and put a little passion in your "dash".

EVENT IDEAS

Each event is timed. The family member with the lowest total time for all events combined wins the gold.

- Flatware Spelling Bee Pick a word. Provide knives, forks, and spoons. Use the utensils to spell the chosen word. The shortest time wins.
- **Couch Tossing** Take all throw pillows and seat cushions off your couch and see who can reset the cushions the fastest.
- **Bed Sledding** Mess up a bed and then time everyone on making it up. For extra team building, try doing a doubles version of this event.
- Tie It Up Select the biggest shoe in the house and see who can tie it the fastest.

(To make things fair for younger competitors, provide them with a time reduction bonus or make older competitors tasks more difficult.)



Love Completely

Is God in the Picture?

This week we are challenged to love completely. And while that has many elements, one thing is for sure, no love, not even the unique love of family is complete without God at the center of it all. We have an opportunity with our families to teach about God-centered lives. The world, in subtle and obvious ways, teaches a self-centered view. This week's activity is a simple, perhaps even symbolic way to counteract self-centeredness and replace it with a focus on God.

• Locate a photo of your entire family. Choose one from vacation or another fun family time (try to avoid posed studio type shots). Tape the photo to the center of a poster board or large piece of paper. Gather everyone around and spend some time reminiscing about the event that the photo represents. Transition your conversation by asking the simple question "Was God with us in this picture?" Encourage everyone to suggest a way in which God was with your family (i.e. He blessed us with a fun time, with safety, with healthy bodies, etc). Write the responses on the poster board surrounding the picture and then find a place to display your new Godcentered family photo.

Special note: Some family members may not have an answer or may even say God was not in the picture. Do not discourage such answers. Use them as way to engage in deeper conversations about how we sometimes miss God in our family experiences.



Humble Pie



This week's alignment challenge is to learn humbly. One of the best lessons in regard to humility that we can teach our children is what it means to be a part of something bigger than ourselves. Lessons can be learned when you serve or play on a team that accomplishes a goal that can not be done by one person or when a team or group can make the task easier. This week you are encouraged to complete a family cooking activity.

Before the team arrives in the kitchen select an adult that will act as "head chef." The head chef should select a recipe that includes various steps and tasks to give everyone a job. It is suggested to choose a cookie or some other baked good that the family can enjoy and also share with family or friends.

With your team in place assign everyone their duty and explain how you are going to work as a team and learn to be content with just doing your part. Also encourage everyone to watch as each family member completes their assigned task.

While your goodies are in the oven, spend some time talking about what it means to be on a team. Discuss how you can humbly learn from other people, not just a coach or "head chef" but also from others on your team.

When your culinary masterpiece is finished decide together who you could share it with (a neighbor, grandparents, etc.) Wrap up by talking about what it means to humbly serve other people. And then deliver the baked item as a family to someone else.



Time Is On My Side... Yes it is.



Living the dash means many things. In this final week we learn about the importance of leaving a legacy. While the concept is certainly beyond the scope of what young children are ready to think about, the idea of the future is certainly not. This week's family fun activity suggestion is to make a time capsule.

Start this activity with an explanation of a time capsule. The goal is to place in it items that are representative of your family. Ask each family member to select items that are specific to them as well as to the whole family. When all items have been gathered, select a sturdy waterproof box that can be buried in your backyard with relative ease. Before burying your time capsule decide together when you will open it or whether you will leave it up to chance.

Additional ideas to enhance your time capsule plans:

- **Plant a tree as you bury your time capsule.** Watch it grow over the years while you wait for the time capsule opening.
- Have each family member write a letter to their future self. Include what is happening in your life now and what you hope is happening in the future.



You made it through the One Month to Live challenge! We hope and pray that this challenge will shape the rest of your life. Write below what you hope to remember from this challenge. How do you hope this impacts your life in the long run? What next steps do you need to take?

Unsure about next steps? Consider attending our new member class, First Things First, finding a way to serve, or keeping your group going. Have questions? Contact Andrea Hodges with any questions (423-722-7220 or ahodges@fcc-jc.org).

