

< LIVING LIFE BACKWARD <

6-Day Devotional

Day 1 – Life is Vapor — Ecclesiastes 1:2; James 4:14

Reflection: Ecclesiastes opens with a word that can feel jarring: “Meaningless.” But the Teacher is not saying life has no value. He is saying life is hebel—vapor, mist, breath, smoke. Life is real, but it is brief. It is here, and then it is gone. James echoes that same truth when he asks, “What is your life?” and answers, “You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” That is not meant to make us hopeless. It is meant to wake us up. We spend so much of our lives acting like we are permanent, like there will always be more time, more opportunities, more chances to finally get serious about what matters. But wisdom begins when we let the brevity of life humble us. Life is a gift, not a guarantee. And when we remember that, we can stop living carelessly and start living faithfully.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to see my life honestly—not with fear, but with wisdom. Help me remember that my days are a gift from You.

Day 2 – When Life Feels Confusing — Ecclesiastes 1:4–8; Psalm 39:4–5

Reflection: One of the most honest things Ecclesiastes does is admit that life can feel repetitive, exhausting, and confusing. Generations come and go. The sun rises and sets. The wind blows around and around. Streams keep flowing. Everything keeps moving. Meanwhile, we work hard, chase goals, fill our schedules, and often still feel like we are not getting where we hoped. That is part of what makes Ecclesiastes so helpful—it says what many of us already feel but do not always know how to say. Life under the sun can feel wearisome. But the Teacher helps us see that part of our confusion comes from expecting this world to give us what it was never meant to give. We expect success to satisfy us, comfort to last, and control to calm us. But life in this fallen world cannot carry that kind of weight. Only God can. The more clearly we see life’s limits, the more clearly we can see our need for Him.

Prayer: God, when life feels confusing or exhausting, help me not to run from You. Remind me that You alone are steady when everything else feels uncertain.

Day 3 – Numbering Our Days — Psalm 90:12; Ecclesiastes 12:1

Reflection: Moses prayed, “Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.” That is such a needed prayer because most of us live as if we have endless tomorrows. We put off obedience. We delay repentance. We assume there will always be another chance to make things right, another season to prioritize what matters, another day to seek God more fully. But Scripture does not tell us to ignore our mortality. It tells us to learn from it. Numbering our days is not about becoming gloomy or fixated on death. It is about becoming clear. It is about letting the reality of life’s brevity reorder our priorities. When we remember that our days are limited, some things start to lose their grip on us. Petty frustrations look smaller. Hidden sin feels more serious. Love, obedience, and faithfulness suddenly feel more urgent. Wisdom grows when we stop pretending life is endless and start living like today matters.

Prayer: Father, teach me to number my days. Give me clarity to live with urgency, humility, and faithfulness today.

Day 4 – Stop Waiting — Proverbs 27:1; Hebrews 3:13

Reflection: One of the great temptations in life is the temptation to wait. We tell ourselves we will obey later, forgive later, repent later, slow down later, get serious later. But Proverbs says, “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.” Tomorrow is never promised, and hearts do not always stay soft forever. Opportunities can pass. Conviction can be ignored. Habits can deepen. That is why Ecclesiastes is such a gift—it interrupts our excuses. It lovingly confronts the way we drift through life assuming we have more time. The call of wisdom is not to panic, but to respond. If God is exposing something in you, do not wait. If there is sin to confess, confess it. If there is someone to forgive, forgive them. If there is obedience you have been delaying, step into it. A life lived in light of the end is not passive. It is responsive. It is awake. It is willing to do today what God is calling us to do today.

Prayer: Jesus, keep me from delaying what You are calling me to do. Help me respond quickly, humbly, and faithfully.

Day 5 – Fear God and Keep His Commandments — Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; Proverbs 9:10

Reflection: The end of Ecclesiastes gives us the lens for the whole book: “Fear God and keep his commandments.” After all the wrestling and all the questions, this is where the Teacher lands. And that is more life-giving than it may sound at first. The fear of the Lord is not just about being afraid of God. It is about reverence, awe, surrender, and trust. It is about putting God back in His rightful place and ourselves in ours. We do not have to be God. We do not have to hold everything together. We do not have to control every outcome. God is God, and we are not—and that is deeply freeing. When we fear God, life begins to settle into its proper order. We stop demanding that temporary things carry eternal weight. We stop trying to make ourselves ultimate. We learn to live humbly, obediently, and faithfully before Him. In a world full of uncertainty, that is a steady place to stand.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to fear You rightly; to walk in reverence, humility, and obedience in You.

Day 6 – Hope Beyond Vapor — 1 Corinthians 15:58; John 11:25-26

Reflection: Ecclesiastes teaches us to be honest about death, but Jesus gives us hope that death is not the end. Jesus stepped into this world of sorrow, weariness, frustration, and loss. He knew what it was to grieve. He knew what it was to suffer. He knew what it was to die. But death did not keep Him. That changes everything. The resurrection does not erase the honesty of Ecclesiastes—it fills it with hope. Yes, life is brief. Yes, this world cannot satisfy the soul. Yes, our days are limited. But in Christ, our lives are not empty, our faithfulness is not wasted, and death is not final. Paul says our labor in the Lord is “not in vain.” That means even in a vapor-like world, faithfulness matters. Quiet obedience matters. Loving people well matters. Trusting Jesus in ordinary days matters. Because Christ is risen, we can live with open hands, steady hope, and deep purpose.

Prayer: Jesus, thank You that death does not get the final word. Help me live with hope, faithfulness, and confidence in You.