

James 4:13-17, "Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit";<sup>14</sup> whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.<sup>15</sup> Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that."<sup>16</sup> But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do *it*, to him it is sin."

Two weeks ago I had the honor of speaking at my grandfather's funeral service. He was 88 years young when he left this world and I am so very proud to say he was a Christian. There are many memories that I shared with him as I grew up in middle Tennessee and he taught me some very valuable lessons. I learned the importance of hard work through his example of hard work. I learned that life will always try to pull the rug out from under you, but if your feet are planted firmly, it is hard to keep a good man down. He taught me to drive a tractor at the young age of seven. He taught me how to properly skin a deer. He taught me the importance of tending the garden everyday and that through hard work a man can accomplish just about anything he sets his mind to. He taught me that calluses on your hands were the mark of man that worked past the blisters. My Pawpaw taught me so much and I am so proud the Lord allowed me to know him for so many years. However important as many of those lesson were, the greatest lesson he ever taught me was in his death.

When we look to the funeral of someone who is "on in years", we say they lived a good long life. The only thing we fail to realize is we didn't ask that person if their life felt long. I had the guts one day to ask my grandfather those words. He said, "Eighty years in this world and it feels just like yesterday that I was a boy in Alabama."

So what is this great lesson I learned? It is the brevity of this life. The author of the above scripture died centuries ago. He inspired many to write about the obvious! Life spans did not begin being brief in the last few generations – they always have been brief!

The deceit: "The brevity of life is just a matter of perspective." At 15, life is agonizingly slow. At 25, life is timeless. At 40, you need to slow down long enough to at least be aware that life is whizzing by. Then the births of grandchildren make you admit you are "that" old. Then opportunities diminish. Then you look at an old man in the mirror shaving – and it is you! Then energy fails as you cannot do what you used to do. A secret: never tell a 95-year-old (or older) that life is not brief! (Unless you enjoy being humiliated by laughter!)

The truth: "Time passes fast regardless of age or arrogance." No matter your age, you never have time to waste. Regretting the past use of time is a common plight of living.

Consider some things to think about. Wisdom can result from accurate perspective, too!

1. Take nothing for granted – never assume that what you did today you can do tomorrow.
2. There is no "do over" button to be pushed in your 60s for what you did in your 30s.
3. In your 20s, do not think you will have the same body and energy level in your 70s.
4. Treat those you regard as old with respect; eventually someone will see you as old – without your permission. (You will get accustomed to being seen as being old.)
5. It may be true that you are only as old as you feel, but your body has a nasty habit of telling the truth. Have you counted your doctor visits lately