

1.1

Number Your Days

I remember the day I turned 46.

My son called me up to wish me a happy birthday and then asked what my plans were for the rest of my life, now that I was getting so old. I promptly replied, without even thinking, that he should show a little respect because I was only halfway done and would still be around to torment him for quite a while. Ha!

Since that day, my ultimate age of 92 still comes up in conversation from time to time. Usually we joke about it, but when I recently turned 60, I gave it some serious thought.

Our little family joke means that I have 32 years to go. Take away a few years for being really old and maybe no longer active, that still leaves more than 25 years of useful life. But useful for what?

In this chapter, we're going to explore what retirement might look like and check the Bible to see what God has to say about it as well. But before we do that, let's find your number. How old do you think you will be when you die?

Of course, there's no way to know, but you might reflect on a few things to make a guess. Think about your parents, aunts and uncles, maybe even older siblings. How old are they now, or when they died? Why did they die? Add to the mix your lifestyle, weight, health, and

think about how these might affect your expected lifespan compared to those who went before you.

Now sit in silence for a moment – really – just close your eyes and imagine yourself as an old person, and pick a number for your ultimate age. No worries that this is a crazy thing to do; in fact, it's biblical to do this, just as the psalmist says:

"Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." – Psalm 90:12

Just pick any number and imagine that is how old you might be. Let's call this your LifeSpan. Now that you have your number, let's open the door to the wisdom part...

First, subtract your current age from the number you just picked as your LifeSpan. This is the number of years still to go.

Next, think about being really old. How close to the end of your LifeSpan will you be when you are no longer living on your own and become incapable of continuing the activities you now enjoy? Although this might be ten years or more, most of us hope for less.

Now subtract these last years of being really old from your LifeSpan. The remaining difference is the number of years you have left to go as an active adult.

With this estimate of how many years you may have left, maybe you can envision a life change still to come: an entirely new career, applying your talent or expertise to help others less fortunate, learning a new skill you always wanted to pick up, or something else. It's as if you're a new graduate with the world ahead of you.

1. GOD'S VIEW OF RETIREMENT

Or maybe you've arrived at your number and you're not too happy about it. Don't get depressed, but praise the LORD that you still have time to enjoy life, relationships, and apply yourself in a way that honors Him.

Reflect on these verses and see if God won't give you wisdom for your retirement as we go through this chapter together.

“Let the wise listen and add to their learning, and let the discerning get guidance.” – Proverbs 1:5

“If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.” – James 1:5

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When you pause to number your days, you are doing something profoundly biblical. You are not merely looking at a calendar or counting time. Numbering your days is pursuing wisdom. The psalmist asks God to teach us to number our days so that we may grow wise. (*Psalm 90:12*). This is more than estimating life expectancy. It is an act of humility, acknowledging that our time is not endless and that every day comes from God's hand.

This humility can feel uncomfortable. We prefer to imagine long futures or avoid thinking about the end. Sometimes we distract ourselves to escape the thought of time passing. Yet Scripture invites us to face our finiteness so that we may live wisely. James writes, “*What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes*” (*James 4:14*). Such words are not meant to depress us but to free us from illusions of control. They call us back to faith and trust, to ask God what matters most when time is limited.

Seeing our days as numbered also changes how we view the years that remain. They are not leftovers. They are part of God's story for us, chosen and given with purpose. Even if our plans shift or our energy lessens, His call does not fade. We still belong to the One who is “*the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last*” (*Revelation 22:13*) and who is making all things new (*Revelation 21:5*).

To number our days rightly is to hold them before the Lord, ready to be filled with His wisdom and His work. This is where retirement becomes holy ground.

Reflection Questions:

1. What number did you choose for your life span, and how many "active" years do you believe you have left?
2. How do you feel about the number of useful years remaining?
3. What might God want you to do with that time?

Notes:

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank You for the gift of life and for the days ahead. Help me to see the time I have left as an opportunity to live wisely and bring You glory. Teach me to number my days and to walk in Your purpose. In Jesus' name, Amen.