

6 Factors Determine How Long You Will Live

How long will you live? A new medical report has the answer. Researchers examined 231,048 adults age 45 and up, following them for six years. They discovered six factors that determine how long people live: smoking, alcohol use, dietary behavior, physical inactivity, sedentary behavior and sleep. The lower your score for at-risk behavior, the longer you'll live.

As the saying goes, this is not rocket science. Here's a more surprising fact: Character is related to longevity as well.

Psychologists note that moral character reduces personal anxiety and stress. When we live in alignment with our values, we are happier people. And stress is one of the most significant contributors to disease, alcohol and drug abuse, depression and early death. To live longer, live better. Choose character.

And to live a life that matters long after you're gone, choose character as well.

In Genesis 13, Abraham and his nephew Lot chose the land on which their tribes would dwell. Lot "settled among the cities of the valley and moved his tent as far as Sodom" (v. 12). However, the writer notes that "the men of Sodom were wicked, great sinners against the Lord" (v. 13).

When God warned Abraham that he would judge the city, the patriarch interceded for the people (Gen. 18:22-33). By this time, Lot had moved into Sodom itself (Gen. 14:12).

Then, when the Lord sent angels to judge the sinful city, Lot hesitated to leave (Gen. 19:15). The angels had to seize him, his wife and his two daughters, forcing them to flee the judgment to come (v. 16). His sons-in-law rejected the angelic

warning and died in the judgment that fell. Lot's wife looked back at the city they tried not to leave and died as well (v. 26). Lot's daughters then seduced him and bore children by their father (vs. 30-38).

Abraham prayed for Sodom, but Lot chose to live there. Today, more than half the world's population venerates Abraham as a patriarch of their faith. No one venerates Lot. I have known many men named Abraham. I've never met a person named Lot.

Your character is essential to your life and your legacy. If you would live a life that God can bless and use, choose integrity. But there's a catch: We cannot become the people God wants us to be without the help God provides.

The Spirit wants to conform you to the character of Jesus (Rom. 8:29). He longs to manifest his love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in your life (Gal. 5:22-23). But he cannot give what you won't receive.

So ask God to make you a person of greater integrity today than you were yesterday. Submit your thoughts, attitudes, words and actions to his Spirit. Walk with Jesus and measure success by the degree to which you demonstrate his character. And God will use your integrity to draw others to the Christ they see in you. (For more on this vital subject, please read my latest website essay, *Integrity: The Key to Leadership*.)

Warren Wiersbe was right: "The highest reward for a faithful life is not what you get for it but what you become by it." David prayed, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer" (Ps. 19:14). I've decided to begin every day by making his prayer mine.

Will you join me, right now?