

Make This Your Battle Cry for God Every Day

Have you ever had one of those days when you were busy all day long but when you got to the end of it, you found you hadn't accomplished anything that you wanted or needed to do? It's so frustrating when this happens. And I know what this feels like.

I'm usually a very goal-oriented person and can stay focused on the things I really want to do. But there was a time recently when I found myself struggling to finish things I started because I was getting distracted by other things that needed to be accomplished as well. So I ended up with a lot of loose ends and felt overwhelmed by everything that needed to be done.

I believe this happens to many people because they are letting their circumstances seize them, allowing the many interruptions that come up take over their day. We need to learn how to live our lives on purpose and invest our time and energy in the plans God is calling us to accomplish.

It's time for us to take our lives back and stop letting everything around us dictate what we are going to do each day. In other words, *carpe diem* (seize the day!).

Maybe you need to wake up.

In Ephesians 5:14-17, the apostle Paul addresses this issue with born-again believers in the church. He says: "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine (make day dawn) upon you and give you light. Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people), making the very most of the time [buying up each opportunity], because the days are evil. Therefore do not be

vague and thoughtless and foolish, but understanding and firmly grasping what the will of the Lord is" (AMPC).

Notice that he says "Awake, O sleeper." Sometimes we find ourselves just going through life and we've lost our excitement about God and His purpose for us because we aren't living life on purpose. It's easy to sit around, waiting for something to happen to you, wishing you were happier, more disciplined, in better shape, more successful, and so on. But we don't reach our goals just by wishing they would be fulfilled.

I often say we don't need more "wishbone," we need more backbone!

Be Careful and Live Carefully

The next thing Paul says is "Look carefully then how you walk!" The Greek word for "carefully" here means to walk circumspectly, looking around you all the time as if you were in a very dangerous place. A good word picture for this definition would be a person walking barefoot in a field of thorns. You'd be very careful where you step, constantly watching where you walk.

We need to be aware that we have an enemy who is trying to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). In 1 Peter 5:8 (AMP), the Bible says to "be sober [well balanced and self-disciplined], be alert and cautious at all times. That enemy of yours, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion [fiercely hungry], seeking someone to devour."

Now, the devil can't devour just anyone he wants to. But those who aren't careful about how they live are vulnerable to his attacks. For example, have you been offended recently? If so, that was a thorn. When we encounter thorns, if we are living carefully, we recognize what they are and resist them. So when an offense comes, we immediately decide, "I know what that is," and purposely decide not to step on it. We'll refuse to

take offense and instead, forgive.

The truth is the devil is always trying to steal from us, and he'll take our joy, our peace, our time—anything we're willing to give him. That's why 1 Peter 5:9 says to "resist him, be firm in your faith [against his attack—rooted, established, immovable]." We accomplish this as we "live purposefully ... not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people), making the very most of the time" (Eph. 5:15-16).

Don't waste your life!

I love how this Scripture says to live like wise, intelligent people, "not as the unwise and witless" who don't know what they are doing. As we take time to study God's Word and learn what His will is, we can make choices that line up with His plans and purpose for our lives.

Make a determined decision to seize each day of your life, focused on the things God puts in your heart to do. Realize that every day that goes by is one you will never get back. Refuse to waste your time living in anger and unforgiveness or settling for a mediocre existence that lacks zeal for the call of God on your life.

Seek God in prayer and through His Word. If you need help getting started on a new track, living with purpose, pray something like this: "God, help me to do what You tell me to do in Your Word. Help me to stop walking around like a sleepy Christian and to live carefully. I want to invest my time and all of my resources in Your kingdom. Help me to seize the day and live for You!" {eo2}