

The Use of Your Time

by Steven J. Lawson

In this sermon, Steven J. Lawson emphasizes the importance of using time wisely to glorify God, drawing from the resolutions of Jonathan Edwards.

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Scripture: Job 14:5, Psalm 90:12, Psalm 139:16, Luke 14:13, John 15:5, John 19:30, 1 Corinthians 10:31, 2 Corinthians 4:18, Ephesians 5:16

Topics: "Time Management", "Eternal Perspective"

Description

This sermon delves into the life and resolutions of Jonathan Edwards, highlighting his unwavering commitment to glorifying God, his perspective on time and eternity, and his preparation for death. Edwards' resolutions focused on living with an eternal perspective, making the most of time, and considering the pains of martyrdom and hell. His life exemplified a dedication to pursuing God's will and maximizing every moment for God's glory, culminating in his faithful death at a young age.

Transcript

to focus upon Jonathan Edwards and specifically the resolutions that he wrote as a young man 18 and 19 years of age. Let me begin by just putting Edwards in his right place even in the mountain range of church history. It was Martin Lloyd-Jones who said, I am tempted to compare the Puritans to the Alps, Luther and Calvin to the Himalayas, and Jonathan Edwards to Mount Everest.

He seems to me to be the man most like the Apostle Paul. That's quite a statement from the doctor himself, Lloyd-Jones, that it was Jonathan Edwards who in essence stood on the shoulders of Calvin and Luther and the Reformers and climbed up a little higher and stood on the shoulders of the Puritans like John Owen and Thomas Watson and other great divines. And he went all the way to the top of the mountain range as it were and had the clearest view of God and systematic theology and the inner workings of the truth of Scripture.

That is why I think it is very worth our while to look in this last session at Edwards and what I want to set before you is there is a reason why I believe God so greatly used Edwards. Granted, he was the greatest American pastor to ever walk on the soil of this continent. He is arguably the greatest preacher over the last three centuries in America.

He is called the greatest theologian America has ever produced and the greatest philosopher that America has ever produced. He has been argued to be the most profound author. R.C. Sproul has said his book, *The Freedom of the Will*, is the greatest book ever to be written on American soil.

He certainly preached the greatest sermon ever to be preached in this land, sinners in the hand of an angry God. It is an amazing thing that all of those lines would intersect in one person. Greatest author, greatest philosopher, greatest pastor, greatest theologian, greatest preacher, greatest book, greatest sermon.

All of this did not merely happen Nothing just merely happens. The sovereignty of God is in and through all things. But Jonathan Edwards, when he was 18 years old, he charted a course that he would follow the rest of his life.

Jonathan Edwards was converted by the grace of God at age 17, and within one year he was the interim pastor in what is today downtown New York City on Wall Street, pastoring a church where there had been a split, a divide, a Scottish Presbyterian church. He was 18 years old. He had grown up in the home of a Puritan pastor, and as soon as he was saved, his heart was inclined to the ministry and the things of God, for that is what he had seen all of his life.

And at age 18, he began to pastor in downtown New York. He still had his master's thesis yet to write. He had completed his coursework at Yale, both in the bachelor and master's level.

And as he began this interim pastorate at age 18, there was a deep conviction and concern in his soul that he be faithful to God, that he not squander this opportunity, that he be one who would pursue holiness with every inch and every ounce of his being. So Jonathan Edwards sat down and wrote what has come to be known as his resolutions. Over the course of the next year and a half, he wrote 70 resolutions.

They were like purpose statements. They almost all began with the word resolved, and then would follow a declaration that was rooted and grounded in the Word of God. These resolutions began with a preamble.

And the preamble is a short two-sentence paragraph that sits on top of the resolutions, and they are very important because in it, in this preamble, he states how dependent he is upon the grace of God to be enabled to fulfill these resolutions. So this is not Jonathan Edwards pulling himself up by his own bootstraps, where he is self-willed to carry out his own sanctification. He is totally dependent upon the grace of God, the ministry of the Holy Spirit, to work and to will for his good pleasure in his own life.

The preamble reads, being sensible that I am unable to do anything. Now you hear John 15, verse 5 in that. Jesus said, apart from me you can do nothing.

Being sensible that I am unable to do anything without God's help. I do humbly entreat Him, God, by His grace to enable me to keep these resolutions so far as they are agreeable to His will for Christ's sake. So having said that, he began to write his resolutions.

The first four are directed and pointed at the glory of God. There is no rhyme or reason as to the order of these resolutions. They're almost like reading the Proverbs, starting Proverbs 10 and following.

They're somewhat jumbled together, except at the beginning, in which Edwards lays this foundation that the entirety of his life must be directed toward the pursuit of the glory of God. It is the overflow of his study of the Westminster Catechism, the Westminster Confession, the teaching of the Reformers, the teaching

of the Puritans. It was all steeped in the glory of God.

He had read Calvin's Institutes that begins with the knowledge of God and the knowledge of man. He was steeped in the Westminster Catechism, what is the chief end of man? To glorify God and to enjoy Him forever. So as he takes pen in hand at age 18, the first four resolutions, let me read parts of them, focus upon the glory of God.

Number one, resolved that I will do whatsoever I think to be most to God's glory. Edwards said the interpretive key in his life, in the pursuit of the will of God, is what will bring greatest glory to God. Who should I marry? What should I do with my life? Where should I live? What endeavor should I undertake? The fundamental core principle Edwards recognized for his life is what will most glorify God.

Not what will most advance me, what will most promote myself, but what decisions, what turns in the road, what forks in the road lie before me, the answer will always be what will most glorify God. Resolution two, resolved to be continually endeavoring to find out some new contrivance and invention to promote the aforementioned things. By that he is saying, as I am on the path to pursue the glory of God, what can be augmented to my life that will springboard me even further in the promotion in the pursuit of the glory of God? What new Bible studies could I undertake? What new ministries could I launch? What new endeavors could I undertake that would be further extensions of glorifying God? Three, resolved, if ever I shall fall and grow weary or grow dull, so as to neglect to keep any part of these resolutions to repent of all I can remember.

So, if at any point he would grow fatigued or weary, become spiritually lukewarm in the pursuit of the glory of God, that he would immediately repent of this and turn away from this, that he might be fervent in pursuing the glory of God. Four, resolved, never to do any manner of thing, whether in soul or body, less or more, but what tends to the glory of God. So, he is a man who is preoccupied with the glory of God.

J. I. Packer writes regarding these first four resolutions that Edwards was, quote, God-centered, God-focused, God-intoxicated, and God-entranced. There is no overstatement here. Every day from morning till night, he sought to live in conscious communion with God, close quote.

Now, later in these resolutions, resolution number 63. This is an extraordinary resolution, and I'm all, and I'm just setting the table for what I really ultimately want to say in this session. He wants to glorify God, just like I'm sure you want to glorify God.

You wouldn't be here today, I would not think, were you not one who would desire to glorify God with your life. First Corinthians 10, whatsoever you do, whether you eat or you drink, do all to the glory of God. Resolution 63 is a shock and awe resolution.

It is mind-boggling. This is what it says. On the supposition that there never was to be but one individual in the world at any one time who was properly a complete Christian in all respects, having Christianity always shining in its true luster, appearing excellent and lovely, resolved to act just as I would do if I strove with all my might to become that one who would live in my time.

You know what Edwards is saying? I want you to think about this. There can only be on the earth at any one time the strongest Christian alive. Edwards said, the goal for my life is to be that man.

Now someone may say, wow, that's kind of a arrogant resolution. Okay, go be the worst Christian in your generation. You think that'll glorify God? You talk about having everything upside down.

No, every one of us ought to say, God, I want to be that one in my generation at that time that Christianity is most fully shining through with its full luster, shining forth from my life. That will glorify God. Edwards said that at age 18 and 19.

When I was age 18 and 19, I was just thinking about playing football. Edwards is thinking about, I want to be the greatest Christian in my generation. Now what he did in the rest of the resolutions charts the course for how he will glorify God and be that one most complete Christian in his lifetime.

In my book on the resolutions of Jonathan Edwards, I divide up all of the resolutions and the different subject matters that he deals with. And there is a a plethora of topics that he covers in the fullness of his own Christian life. Time does not permit me to do the overview of all 70 resolutions.

What I want to do at this time right now is just isolate one slice of the pie. Just isolate one piece of the armor. Just focus upon one area of his resolutions that addressed a critically important area in his Christian life.

Now this subject matter may somewhat surprise you. As Edwards wanted to live for the glory of God and be the greatest Christian in his generation, he wanted to do so in the nitty-gritty of life. Down in the day-to-day Christian living.

And so he said, I want to live with an eternal perspective. And in order to live with an eternal perspective, there are three subjects that need to be present before my life on a daily basis all the time. The shortness of life, the certainty of death, and the length of eternity.

The shortness of life, the suddenness of death, and the length of eternity. Edwards would say elsewhere, God, stamp eternity upon my eyeballs. That was his way metaphorically to say, I want to live with an eternal perspective.

I want to live in such a way as not to be confined with the mundane, trivial things of this temporal life and world as if this is all that there is. If I am to rise above the temporal and live for the eternal, if I am to rise above that which I can see and live for that which I cannot see, if I, if right now is to count forever, then I must have this eternal perspective. That is what every one of us here today needs.

We need to live for eternity. What I do right now, how will it have its impact upon eternity? And so Edwards wrote several resolutions that dealt with time and dealt with death and dealt with eternity. Resolution number five.

Edwards understood that time is a very precious commodity. And this is what was driving Edwards on this. He understood if he wasted his time and squandered his time, he could not most glorify God.

Resolution number five reads thus. Resolved. And don't you like that word resolved? How many people do you know that are actually resolved? How many people do you know that are actually intentionally, purposely living their Christian lives and who are not like the wave of the sea being tossed back and forth? How many people do you know that are not taking the path of least resistance, but are taking the path of greatest resistance to the extent that they are being pointed into the center of living for eternity? Jonathan Edwards was determined.

He was resolved. He would not become subject to the tyranny of the urgent, of the latest emergency to be thrown at his feet. No, he had set the priorities for his life and his priorities would dictate the decisions that

he would make.

Resolved. Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it the most profitable way I possibly can. As Edwards said this, he understood that I can only glorify God in this life, in the prescribed amount of time that God has given to me to be alive on this earth.

Therefore, this time is precious and it is invaluable and it is like liquid gold and I cannot waste and I cannot squander one moment of time because it is in the proper and most efficient use of my time that I will glorify God. If I use my time most wisely, I can most glorify God with what is put in front of me. So he said, I have no time to lose.

He would argue that riches can be lost and then later regained, but not time. Once time is forfeited and lost, it can never be replaced. Now, Jonathan Edwards had such a high view of the sovereignty of God, he understood a very basic truth, which is, that the number of days and the number of hours and the number of seconds that we have to live upon this earth have already been sovereignly preordained by God.

From before the foundation of the world, God determined the moment of my birth and he has determined the moment of my death and everything in between is what God has sovereignly ordained for me to live and it is the perfect number of days and it is the most wise number of days that could be chosen for me. Job 14, verse 5, since his days are determined, the number of his months is with you God and his limits. You have set so he cannot pass.

You cannot pass the predetermined number of months and days and seconds that you have to live. Psalm 90, verse 12 says, so teach us to number our days, that we may present to you a heart of wisdom. God has numbered our days.

We would be very wise to number our days. Psalm 139, verse 16, your eyes have seen my unformed substance and in your book they were all written the days that were ordained for me when as yet there was not one of them. God has ordained the time that you have to live on this earth.

You do not have a second to waste, to live with any other intention and goal but to glorify God to the max. Now, to take this further, Edwards rightly understood that not only had God preordained and prescribed a certain number of days, but that within that time allotment there were designated opportunities to do that which God has appointed me to do and that I must capture the moment when those doors swing open. Those doors will then later be closed and I must go through those doors of opportunity within time.

Ephesians 5, verse 16 makes this very clear and one of Edwards most powerful sermons was on this text. If time permits, I would love to share some of that with you at the end. But Ephesians 5, 16 says that we are to be making the most of your time.

The most of our time. This word for time is not chronos, which refers to clock time, chronology, or a chronometer is a watch. That's not the word that Paul is using here, making the most of the time that you have.

It is kairos, which means a season or opportunity, a fixed period within time in which you are given divine opportunities to do something for God. We often call them divine appointments. A prearranged, divinely arranged season of time, windows of time that are opened by God for us to do something to glorify Him and those open doors will soon shut.

Isaiah 55, 6, seek the Lord while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Psalm 69, 13, O Lord, my prayer to You is in an acceptable time.

Psalm 32, 6, let everyone who is godly pray to You in a time when You may be found. There are times when God may be found, there are times when God may not be found. There are times when God is near, there are times when God is far away.

Luke 14, verse 13, there is a time for Satan to advance against Christ to tempt Him in the wilderness and there are times for Satan to withdraw and then come back again at a more opportune time. There are opportune times in your life to do certain things today, this moment, that you will not have at other times in your Christian life. Dads, you have opportunities with your sons and daughters today that you will not have next year.

They cannot be replicated again. We must seize the moment. Edwards understood this and so therefore he was a driven man, even as a young man, that he must buy up the time, he must seize the moment, he must live every day knowing that I do not have time to waste or to squander.

There was a pace about his life, there was a press about his life, that he must do the works of God while it is day for when night comes no man can work. Do you feel that press of eternity upon your life? Do you wake up sensing that this is a day which the Lord has made, I shall rejoice and be glad in it, that God has pre-ordained good works for me to walk in, that I'm living in a sense of destiny every moment of every day? Would you say to God, God stamp eternity upon my eyeballs? That would greatly affect the use of your time this afternoon. It would greatly affect the use of your time tonight.

It would greatly affect how much television do you watch? How much do you sleep? When do you go to sleep? When do you wake up? How much do you read the Bible? How much do you pray? How much do you witness? Are you intentional? Are you resolved? You only have so little time. Edwards said in this resolution that he wanted to improve it the most profitable way. He understood he had to be very strategic, that he had to be very thoughtful, that he had to be very scrutinizing in how he improved the use of his time.

In Ephesians 5, verse 15 and following, the Scripture reads, Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. That verb, making the most, *ex agarizo*, means to redeem. In the old King James it says, redeeming the time.

It means to buy it up. The imagery here is going into the marketplace and something is offered for sale now that will not be for sale later. And if you're going to purchase it, you must purchase it now.

Almost as if there is a sale and it is offered now at this price, and if you are to have it at this price, you must have it now and purchase it now. There must be an exchange. You cannot come back to the same place in the same marketplace next week and expect to be able to purchase this commodity.

If you're to have it, you must have it now. You can't not procrastinate. You cannot put off the time.

The business transaction with the one who is selling, it must be secured now. Redeem the time for the days are evil. And Edwards understood that these doors of opportunity would swing open in life, and when they swing open, he must move in and he must buy up that time.

When I went to college, I went to Texas Tech University. I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee. I went out on a football scholarship.

And when I went out to college, it seemed like I went to the moon, a long ways away from rivers and lakes and green grass and trees, out to the barren country of West Texas. It was a huge family event. My family had a Volkswagen bus.

We were not hippies at that time, but we were in this Volkswagen bus. My father, my mother, myself, my brother, my sister, and we all drove. It took us a couple days to get to Lubbock.

I'm the oldest child. This was a huge step. And I remember moving into the dorm, and my father and my mother carefully helping me gather everything up, putting it in the closet, fixing my bed, puffing up the pillow, putting a little alarm clock out, everything you would do.

And then my father, at the very end, he gave me his speech. And I remember he reached into his pocket, and he pulled out a dollar bill. And he said, Stephen, your allowance for the semester.

I was waiting for the answer for this. My mom was standing right behind him. I remember, your allowance, and he gave me the amount.

It was an extraordinarily small amount. And I was doing the math in my head while he was talking, breaking this down by month, by week, by day, by meal, this money. And he pulled out this dollar bill, and he began to pull it in opposite corners.

No one could work a dollar bill like my father. He was the most frugal man who has ever walked planet Earth. To this day, I still have never had a large Coke.

It's always the small Coke and get the refill. I used to take his ballpoint pen, and I would click it, and he would take it back from me and say, that's one less time it'll work, son. I suppose you're right.

So, he said to me, what this amount was. He said, this is all that there'll be. Now, it's going to have to last you the entire semester.

And he said, every time you put your hand into your pocket, and you pull out a dollar bill, I want you to remember me standing here with this dollar bill. And I want you to spend every dollar bill wisely. Because when you run out, there will be no more.

I knew my dad was serious as a heart attack. And I knew that my mother would give me more. As she was smiling behind my dad as he's giving this speech, she's winking at me.

But I have never forgotten that little speech. And that's the way I must be with the time allotment in my life. I don't have a day to waste.

You don't have a day to waste. I don't have a morning to waste. I don't have an afternoon to waste.

I remember one man coming by my office while early in my pastorate. And he came by and he wanted to visit. And he came into my office, sat down, said, how can I help you? And he said, nothing really.

I just wanted to kill some time. I think there are a lot of people who go through life that way. They're just time killers.

And it would be nice if they would just kill their own time. But they want to kill other people's time. And you're taking away from other people their maximum opportunity to glorify God, to be productive in the pursuit of what God has laid out in His will.

This is not to say there's not a place for recreation. There's the Sabbath principle taught throughout Scripture. We must rest.

There is the need for the recreation of recreation. We cannot live full tilt every moment of every second of every life. It's like highlighting in yellow every word on a page.

Then nothing really necessarily stands out. There is an ebb and a flow of life. But I want to tell you this.

You only have so much time on this planet to breathe God's air and to drink God's water and to do God's will. And for God's sake, you better get on what He's called you to do. If He's called you to the ministry, then get after it.

If this is the time to step forward and to go in a certain direction, then pursue the will of God in your life. There is only so much time to do it. Now I want to give you another resolution.

Bruce, I don't even know what time it is. When do I finish? I mean, I... Okay. Alright.

I'll make anything work. Yeah, Whitfield's last sermon was two hours, as I told you, up at Exeter, New Hampshire. Resolution number seven.

Resolved. Never to do anything that I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life. Edwards purposed to live his life as Baxter said we should preach.

As a dying man to dying men, as never to preach again. Edwards purposed that he would focus upon the end of his life and then work back. And that he never wanted to be found doing anything that he would not do if it were the last hour of his life.

And as he studied the Gospels, he understood that Christ was consciously aware of that last hour of his life. John 2, 4. My hour has not yet come. Referring to that last hour.

And it was the finish line. It was the conclusion of the will of God that the Father had charted for him. And he was pressing towards that finish line.

And he always kept his eye upon that last hour of his life. John 7, 6. My hour is not yet here. John 7, 30.

His hour had not yet come. John 12, 27. Father, save me from this hour, but for this purpose I came to this world.

John 17, 1. Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you. John 19, verse 30.

It is finished. There was no rambling in his life. There was no weaving all over the highway.

There was no dabbling over here. And let me try something else over here. There was a very mature press about his life as he was pointed to the finish line.

And he would not look to the right. He would not look to the left. He would not look at the others who were running around him in the race of life.

His gaze was upon the finish line, the last hour of his life. He prepared all of his life for the last hour of his life. That he would die well.

That he would die without regret. That he would die without saying, as so many that he had heard, oh, if I had only done this. Oh, if I had only made these choices and pursued these endeavors.

No, when I come to the end of my life, I want to say it is finished. And to die like his master. And the very epicenter of the will of God for his life.

So, resolved. Never to do anything that I should be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life. Can you envision the last hour of your life? Whether it's this afternoon.

Whether it is in a month. Whether it's in a year or a decade. Or whenever it is.

Who knows what the circumstances will be. Who knows where that will be, when that will be, with whom it will be. But unless the Lord returns before then, when that day is fixed on God's calendar for your life, you need to stay focused and riveted upon the last hour of your life.

So that you will die without regret. That you make choices and decisions in your life today that will affect the path that you take when you arrive on that last day. Resolution number 10.

This is a resolution that will grow you up. This is a resolution that will make an 18-year-old young boy appear to be 68. Appear to be 78.

This will give you wisdom beyond your years. Resolved. When I feel pain, to think of the pains of martyrdom and hell.

If you're going to live with an eternal perspective, and when you face disappointment, when you face trials, when you face problems, when you face difficulty and adversity and tribulation, you need to keep that in proper perspective. We have a tendency to become preoccupied on our troubles. And they grow, and they grow, and they grow, and they escalate, and they dwarf us, and they intimidate us, and they paralyze us.

And they cause us to be self-centered, and they defeat us, and they cause self-pity to arise out of our hearts. And Edwards said, so that I can keep everything in rightful perspective, I want to be constantly thinking about martyrs and souls in hell. To think about those in Fox's book of martyrs who were strapped to the stake and gave a witness for their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Who were literally burned at the stake for their gospel testimony. And in comparison, we virtually have never had a bad day here upon the earth. Seven years ago, I was forced out of the pastorate of a church that I pastored.

It was a very painful experience. It's a publicly humiliating experience. Family, friends, enemies, foes, newspaper, television.

It's a very painful thing to go through. To step into a pulpit, to preach your last sermon, to give your resignation, and then to just walk out of the building. You know what kept everything in perspective for me? It's reading about the Marian martyrs in the English Reformation.

Reading about those men who preached what I preach, but yet they were strapped to a stake and were burned to a crisp. I walked away. I walked out.

I got in a suburban. My son drove the getaway car. I was able to stop and get out of the car and shake the dust off my feet.

I was driven home. I had a meal. Next day I played golf with my boys.

I've never had a bad day. In my preaching Bible, I have a picture of John Rogers. He was burned at the stake in 1555.

He was the first Marian martyr. He was the first to be torched by Bloody Mary for his evangelical beliefs. In the back of my Bible, I have the wood carving of John Rogers being strapped to the stake in London and being burned to death in front of his church building, in front of his congregation, in order to try to attempt to intimidate them all.

They would burn the shepherd. Their intent was for the sheep to scatter. When I read this resolution of Edwards, I thought, there is much wisdom in this.

For all of us to think constantly of martyrdom and hell, not that we have some morbid spirit or martyr's complex. That's not it. But the things that upset us and the things that stress us out, quite frankly, do not even begin to compare with what the martyrs experienced.

And then he says, and of hell. Now, let me just remind all of us, if every one of us in this room received what we deserve, we would all be in hell right now. We would have been in hell from the moment we were conceived.

In the day that you sin, you shall surely die. The fact that we are not in hell right now suffering the torment of the damned is far better treatment than any one of us deserve. That is a theological truth.

And that helps put everything in right perspective for my Christian life. I have pressures in my life right now that are squeezing me and cause my mind at times to be anchored into those things. And it's not spiritually healthy for me to become concentrated upon those things.

I need to set my mind on things above and not on things of the earth. But I also need to set my mind on things below. Souls being tormented in hell right now.

And realize that that mercy that has been shown to me is so astonishing and amazing that by comparison of souls in hell right now, I have no problems. I have nothing for which I can complain. There's no reason for me to have a pity party.

There is no reason for me to whine. There is no reason for me to be the focus of every conversation that I'm in to draw other people into my problems. I'm not in hell.

Jonathan Edwards, as an 18-year-old young man, he purposed that I will think about hell and I will think about martyrdom so that everything in my life will be kept in proper perspective. When I went to London a few years ago, I landed at the airport, got on the train, took the subway. I wanted to go first to Bunhill Fields.

I want to see where the Puritans are buried. At that time, it was outside the city limits. They would not allow John Owen to be buried inside the city limits.

They would not let John Bunyan be buried inside the city limits. Isaac Watts, you're on the outside looking in. I wanted to go to Bunhill Field and just stand with those men who have been rejected and many who have died ignominious deaths.

And from there, I went to St. Bartholomew's Hospital. Interestingly enough, that is exactly where Mart Lloyd-Jones practiced medicine before he was called into the gospel ministry. And on the backside of the hospital is a little brass plaque that no one would ever see unless you are intentionally going there and looking for it.

And on this brass plaque, it says, here is where John Rogers was burned at the stake for his evangelical faith in the Word of God and the gospel of Christ. Just to have it etched into my mind again that these men paid a valiant price, a great price, for their Christian faith. And as I live my spiritual life resolved, when I feel pain, when I feel disappointment, when I feel discouragement, to think of the pains of martyrdom and of hell.

Let me give you one more and then we're finished. Resolution number 50. Resolved.

I will act so as I think I should judge would have been best and most prudent when I come into the future world. Edwards wanted his present life to be shaped by whatever would be most important upon entering heaven. Whatever is important there must dominate the landscape of my life now.

Whatever is of priority in heaven there, when I enter into heaven, that must be moved up the list and must be at the top of what is most important in my life today. Whatever matters to God and Christ in eternity, in heaven, around the throne of God, forever and ever and ever, what is ever of highest value in that day must be as gold and silver in my life today. That is what Edwards is saying.

He cites 2 Corinthians 4 verse 18, while we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal. Edwards chose to live his life in such a way that he was not preoccupied with the visible, but with the invisible, not with the temporal, but with the eternal, not with the earthly, but with the heavenly.

He wanted his life to count to the maximum for God. So fast forward, if you would, to the end of his life. So how did Edwards die? What did it look like on the last day of his life? Well, it is by no coincidence that after age 18 and 19, Jonathan Edwards did become the greatest preacher, the greatest pastor, the greatest theologian, the greatest author, who preached the greatest sermon.

It wasn't because he had time to kill, and he was just shuffling through life, looking for something to do. He had purpose, he had intention, and he was resolved. He became the third president of Princeton, following his own son-in-law.

And Edwards, you know the story of the end of his life. As soon as he was inaugurated and became president of Princeton, he was resolved to write the history of the work of redemption. It would be his magnum opus.

It would be in the league of Calvin's institutes of the Christian religion. It would be up there with Luther's The Bondage of the Will. One month into his presidency, on February 13, 1759, Edwards was inoculated for smallpox.

He was the president, set the example for the student body. Everyone needs to be inoculated for smallpox. I, the president, will be inoculated to show you that it will not harm you.

He took the smallpox vaccination, and tragically, it had the very opposite effect on him. His throat began to swell to the point that he could not breathe. His wife, Sarah, was back in upstate New York, there where he had ministered to the Indians on a fifth grade level.

He has now come to Princeton, New Jersey, to assume this presidency. He is there by himself with only his daughter, Lucy, at his bedside. I recently was in Princeton and went to this very house and went to the very room in which Edwards died.

Dear Lucy, It seems to me to be the will of God that I must shortly leave you. Therefore, give my kindest love to my dear wife and tell her that the uncommon union, which has so long subsisted between us, has been of such a nature that I trust is spiritual and therefore will continue forever. And I hope she will be supported in her so great a trial and submit cheerfully to the will of God.

And as to my children, you are now to be left fatherless, which I hope will be an inducement to you all to seek a father who will never fail you. Jonathan Edwards had prepared his entire adult life for this moment. As he came to the end of his life, he was not a man cursing and shrieking and pulling back from the horrors of his appointed time.

He was a man who had given himself for the last years since age 18 to the pursuit of this day. He died as he had lived, glorifying God. He died suddenly on March 22, 1759 at age 55, only two short months after becoming president of the College of New Jersey, which would become Princeton.

Upon learning of Jonathan's death, Sarah, still in Stockbridge packing their belongings, wrote this note to their daughter Esther. What shall I say? A holy and good God has covered us with a dark cloud. Oh, that we may kiss the rod and lay our hands on our mouths.

The Lord has done it. He has made me adore his goodness that we had him so long. But my God lives, and he has my heart.

Oh, what a legacy my husband and your father has left to us. We are all given to God. And there I am and love to be your affectionate mother, Sarah Edwards.

Upon her arrival in Princeton with their family belongings, she then immediately died herself. And then Lucy died, all in a matter of months. And when you go to Princeton now, to the cemetery, there is Jonathan Edwards.

And lying next to her, next to him, Sarah Edwards. They both had lived charting a course for the day of their death that they would maximize the time that had been given to them to live every moment of every day in the pursuit of the glory of God. How are you investing your life? I wonder how much time you have left upon this earth.

How uncertain it is. Only God knows how wise of a steward are you with the opportunities that are around you today. May every one of us number our days and present to God a heart of wisdom.

Let us pray. Our Father, you have sovereignly ordained that we would be birthed into the 20th century and that we would be alive in the 21st century. You have appointed who our parents would be, what our

personality would be, what our gender would be, what our complexion, what our physical body would be, what our gifts, what our abilities.

You have appointed the day of our conversion. You have appointed those people who would be around us whose influences would be brought to bear upon our lives. Even those that have been of evil influence, you have meant for good.

And over it all, you have caused all things to work together for our good. And you have already prescribed the end of our lives. Except Christ return before then, every one of us in this room will die.

And we must prepare for that day now. May you lead us to put one foot in front of the other on the narrow path as we would continue our course in this world. I pray there would be a sense of urgency about our lives, a sense of picking up the pace and pressing on to the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us run the race that is set before us. Let us not beat the air. Let us buffet our bodies, lest we be disqualified.

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us. Let us not become entangled with sin. Let us be fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith.

Father, would you bless these men. And as the dust clears from this conference, I pray that there would be a certainty and a centrality about these truths that would be secured and anchored into their hearts. May we live as mighty men of old.

May we be as those who turn the world upside down. Father, I pray that you would bless these men, that they might be a blessing to countless others and that the eternal destinies of others would be altered through the pursuit of your will by these men here today. I commend them to your grace and to your word, which is able to sanctify them and make them strong.

I pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and our Savior. Amen.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/delXWlaGhf8.mp4>

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