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One Day

Use the only day you have.

- Joel Hilliker
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A friend of mine wasn't feeling well. Her illness lasted for some time and she decided to get diagnosed. She was shocked to learn that she had a very aggressive form of cancer. She was told she had weeks, or mere days, left to live.

When our perspective is limited, such news is devastating. Sometimes, though, life doesn't even give us notice—it just ends unexpectedly. One day someone is alive; the next they're not.

If you suddenly learned today was your last, how would you react? Could you view your life as a success?

If I heard that news, it would be difficult not to be stricken with regrets. *I should have done this better—devoted more energy to that—squandered less time on this—applied myself more earnestly to that.*

Jesus Christ tells us, "I know thy works" (Revelation 2, 3). When He returns, "he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:27). If you were measured only by your works up to *today*, what reward would you receive?

Generally, the younger we are, the easier it is to behave as though our days are innumerable. The future always holds promise: *One day, I'll climb that mountain. One day, I'll conquer those weaknesses and sins. One day, I'll attain that character growth. One day means not today.* But if this means treating today carelessly, it is fool's thinking. What if you don't have nearly as much time as you think?

As we age—and those *one days* become *too lates* and *nevers*—we better grasp how "all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass" (1 Peter 1:24). "The days of our years" pass startlingly fast and are easily misspent. "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom" (Psalm 90:10, 12).

End-of-life situations tend to make us acutely aware of how precious just *one day* can be. In another case, a man learned of a deadly condition mere weeks before it claimed his life. Not long afterward, his widow told me that the two of them had treated each of those final days as a gift. "The last three weeks were the best weeks of our marriage," she said. "All those things you get irritated about—suddenly those don't seem so important. We just enjoyed each other."

Shame it takes the threat of the grave to awaken us to our mortality—and to convince us to value life and to cherish what is precious.

Another woman I spoke with has a rare and serious condition, about which she can do little, that could remain unthreatening indefinitely—or could kill her at any time. What is her attitude? She says she is excited, whatever happens. I know many older people who have attained such serene perspective in their sunset years. This woman, however, is a young mother with small children. She trusts that God is keenly aware of this reality, and is placing her future in His hands. This takes unusual spiritual maturity.

God does say the death of one of his saints is *precious* (Psalm 116:15). For the individual whose life is hid in God, death truly does mean the end of a struggle. The next waking moment is one of GLORY! (1 Corinthians 15:52-54). That person will rise in a world ruled by Christ as King; Satan banished. That world is everything we long for! Death means evading the horrors that are about to suffocate this world in the satanic climax of this age of man. In a sense it means *Christ returning immediately*.

“[B]ehold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be” (Revelation 22:12). The more you are using your life to serve God today—the greater your works to this point, by which Christ will determine your eternal reward—the more excited you would be at that prospect.

At the same time, that such a moment could happen at any time powerfully speaks to the need to *seize the day*. There is only ONE DAY we can do anything with, and that is TODAY. We must *use* the painfully brief opportunity we have to qualify for our eternal position.

Of course we miss loved ones when we lose that day-to-day sharing of life. Even this bespeaks the need to, like that couple, use each day we *do* have to express and grow in godly love rather than squandering it with pettiness.

Just a few weeks before receiving her diagnosis, my friend had no palpable sense of how close to death she was. Then one day she learned she had *mere days* left. For a person who is in her period of judgment today (most of the world is not yet—1 Peter 4:17), practically speaking, her period of qualification and judgment was nearly over. The number of talents she had earned was nearly set, and measurable (Matthew 25:14-30).

You and I have no guarantee of any more than ONE DAY to secure the greatest possible spiritual reward: *the day we are living right now*. Pray for forgiveness for wasted time, misspent energy, overlooked opportunity. Stop saying, *One day, I'll get around to this and that*. Evaluate, cement your priorities, and act. That *one day*—is TODAY.