

1 The Samoan Skip

2 Skipping a Day

- At the end of 2011, the tiny country of Samoa jumped from Thursday, December 29 directly to Saturday, December 31, skipping an entire day.
- They did it in order to align their calendar with that of their closest trading partners, Australia, and New Zealand.

3 A New Dawn for Samoa

4 Samoa

5 Don't Worry

- Now if December 30th, of last year was skipped, doesn't that mean that those with birthdays on that day couldn't celebrate their birthday?
- To fix that, there are plans in the making for a grand birthday celebration this year.
- Already, roughly 510 Samoans, whose birthday was missed last year, are getting together for this special event.

6 Sabbath controversy

- Church is a big deal in the largely Christian Samoa, where the national motto is "Samoa is founded on God."
- People are devout about the Sabbath, and have been losing an international trade day because of it.
- But now the only people bent out of shape are the Seventh Day Adventists.
- They have already changed their calendars to match the Australians and now their Saturday is on the Samoan Sunday and they both go to church on the same day.

7 The Theology of Skipping

- If it is OK for the Samoans to skip a day, doesn't that mean we as Christians can skip a day too?
- Or is each day of our lives a gift from God to be treasured, valued, and used productively?
- Jonathan Edwards, who was to become the well-known Puritan preacher, wrote at age 19 in his Resolutions: "Resolved: Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way that I possibly can.
- Doesn't the Scripture say the same thing in Psalm 118, This is the day the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. (Psalms 118:24 NIV)
- So then, how do we make the most of every day?

8 The Apostle Paul

- Paul opens with the command, Be careful then how you live. (v. 15).
- The Greek word for "live" comes from the same root word as "behave" and "walk around."

- Throughout Ephesians, Paul wants people living, behaving and walking around in a way that matches their new identity in Christ (2:1–3; 4:1, 17; 5:1, 8).
- Only let us live up to what we have already attained. (Philippians 3:16 NIV)

9 John Stott

- John Stott summarizes the ethics of Ephesians as "Living in God's New Society."
- To Stott, spiritual liberation gives us new life in Christ, and collectively we co-create a new society ordered around the ethics of the rule of God.
- In other words, this “new society” is called the church or the Ekklesia of God, where God lives by His Spirit not only in each member but in the local assembly as a whole.
- However, the people of this new society must incorporate the values and ethics of God’s Kingdom or His presence, identification, and manifestation with them will be frustrated, hampered, or even forsaken.

10 Not Unwise, But Wise

- To live as wise and not unwise means "making the most of the time."
- The word "making the most of" -- exagorazō -- is usually translated as the verb "to redeem."
- It literally means "to release by means of paying a price."
- Wise living requires intentional, hard work. It's carpe diem, which means in Latin, “seize the day.”
- It's making a choice that sets us apart from others, or at least the way others tend to manage their time or make use of their time.

11 Smarter not Harder

- Regardless of our age, this kind of wise living is possible.
- But the work of wisdom isn't just more effort. Try-harder may not be the answer.
- We're to be careful, or literally "accurate," how we live.
- This requires self-reflection of where our life is hitting and missing.
 - It means we need to listen to our conscience.
 - It means we need to listen to what the scriptures really say.
 - It means we need to listen to our peers (or higher) -- "well meant are the wounds a friend inflicts" (Proverbs 27:6).
- So let's ask ourselves and our friends, where is my lifestyle "un-careful?"

12 Not Our Will, But God’s Will

- Paul next contrasts two ways to live, as if he were rewriting a proverb: So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. (v. 17).
- Jesus prayed two crucial prayers that demonstrate this.

- He taught his disciples to seek his Father's will done on Earth, as it always is in heaven.
- And then modeling that on his last anguishing night in Gethsemane, he resigned his desire to his Father's agenda, praying "Not my will, but yours be done."

13 Not Our Will, But God's Will

- We all have needs, desires, anxieties, and even silly hopes – so let's honestly express them to God, especially since God already knows all about them.
- This is what keeps us in a real relationship with the Lord when we discuss with Him what is going on in our life and invite His counsel, wisdom, and direction.
- However when we ask, we need to remember the life-shaping example of Christ who the trusted Father's will above His own and was honored above all others.
- So too, will the Father honor our lives when we submit to Him the same attitude. Not my will by thy will be done.

14 Pete Scazzero

- Queens, N.Y., author and pastor Pete Scazzero is a recovering workaholic.
- So he has developed his own rhythm to daily resubmit his life to God's will.
- In a personalized adaptation of the Liturgy of the Hours, Scazzero drives to work each day and simply asks God, "What is the life you want me to lead today?"

15 The "Small Ticket"

- Many of us have limited the will of God to big-ticket life issues -- do I take this job, do I marry him, should we rent or buy, etc?
- But what if we learned the "small-ticket" practice of seeking God's will? Pausing to ask the Scazzero question and listening for how we sense God's leading?
- Imagine these everyday situations, infused with greater desire for God's presence and pleasure:
 - Feeling stress about the bills this month,
 - Traveling to see the "in-laws."
 - Feeling dateless and hopeless ... again,
 - Responding to the shrill whine of our child,
 - Frustrated over criticism or failure at work.
- "God, what is the life you want me to lead right now?" A 60-second pause to tune our ears and souls to God could make all the difference in the world from being unwise to being wise.

16 Not Spirits, but Spirit

- Paul's final thought is a bit of a shocker.

- Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. (Ephesians 5:18 NIV)
- Why Paul talks about drunkenness is a head scratcher.
- Perhaps he's making an example of a specific issue he's heard about in Ephesus. Or maybe he's warning against the way some pagan cults encouraged drunkenness to create connection with the spiritual world.
- However, what we do know is that trying to cope with our problems, worries, and troubles with alcohol is unwise and is something that only leads to more problems.
- Instead, we are to show real wisdom and make every opportunity to lead the Spirit-filled life, so that we can constantly be filled to overflowing.

17 O Be Careful, Little Eyes

18 Our choices

- The point is this . . . when we don't live for the day and instead make unwise choices in what we say and do, it effects the Holy Spirit's presence, work, and ministry in our lives.
- So when we grieve the Holy Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30 NIV), the "living water" that is suppose to come from our lives runs dry and becomes useless in helping us in our marriages, families, church, and our witness to the world.
- But let us not run off half-cocked, but as the text says, understand what the Lord's will is . . . (Ephesians 5:17 NIV).
- Piety alone does not satisfy all our covenantal obligation. We have to watch, what we see, what we hear, where we go, and what we say.
- Starting with Ephesians 4:1 to the end of his epistle, the Apostle Paul has outlined extensively how Christians should live out their faith and become what God has called us to be—Imitators of God.

19 Secret of a Spirit filled Life

- "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever — the Spirit of truth." (John 14:15 NIV)
- "We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him." (Acts 5:32 NIV)
- So, let us, be very careful, then, how [we] live — not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, (Ephesians 5:15-16 NIV), so that we can be filled with the Spirit to overflowing and be effective in ministering God's grace in it various forms.

20 Today is a Gift, Don't Skip it!

- Sometimes, like the Samoans, we'd just love to skip a day, no doubt about it.
 - We know what the day holds.

- We know the challenges that lie ahead.
- We know what we're going to be called to do.
- We'd rather roll over and stay in bed, or jump to the next day.
- Christians are not people who want to skip -- anything -- that God has set before us. Today is a gift from God.
- We should value it, treasure it and live it to the glory of God so that out from our inner most being will come rivers of "living water."
- The world needs Spirit filled believers to give them hope.
- So do our marriages, our families, our churches, and our community. Let us therefore, redeem each and every day to its fullness because the days are evil and people need to see from us reasons to give them hope in God.

21 Carpe diem

- So how can we "seize the day?"
 - When someone insults or mistreats you, fight off the temptation to pay back insult with insult. Instead do good and pray for your enemies.
 - When your children are children and spoil your best laid plans, don't loose it by coming unglued. Instead model how to handle disappointments in a godly way.
 - When your neighbor has lost their job and can no longer pay for all their bills, don't look down on them. Do something that will help them and encourage them to be hopeful.
 - When your day is full of things to do, don't leave home without prayer. Get up a little earlier and set aside time with God getting his counsel and help for your busy day.
 - [And the list can go on and on!]