

LEAVING A LEGACY - A VIEW FROM 60

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I cannot tell you how excited and honored I am to present these words from a brilliant man who also happens to be my Dad. He has been a critical player in 28 church plants, currently acts as the Executive Pastor at [Hill Country Bible Church](#) in Austin, Tx, and happens to be the best wedding invitation co-shopper that ever existed. At 63 years old he can still look at his parents, and also watch 2 generations below him unfolding. His perspective is extensive. The following are his thoughts on [leaving a legacy](#) -- get excited for some great advice:

1 Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations.

2 Before the mountains were born
Or You gave birth to the earth and the world,

Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

3You turn man back into dust
And say, "Return, O children of men."

4For a thousand years in Your sight
Are like yesterday when it passes by,
Or *as* a watch in the night.

10As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years,
Or if due to strength, eighty years,
Yet their pride is *but* labor and sorrow;
For soon it is gone and we fly away.

12So teach us to number our days,
That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

I think I was around thirty when Psalm 90 first got my attention. It was the second time I had seriously wrestled with my own mortality. The first was when I was twenty-one and my nineteen year old brother was killed in a tragic car accident. Nineteen year olds are not supposed to die; they are supposed to have their whole life in front of them. They are supposed to fall in love, get married, have children, pursue a career, and enjoy a long and satisfying life. Hold their grandchildren.

That was when I first realized that I didn't have "plenty of time". It was the first time that I felt what the writer of Ecclesiastes called "eternity in my heart" sneaking up on me. At the time, the fear that gripped me was as if I was in the ocean and a great white shark was circling me. My mortality was a terrifying specter.

At thirty I was startled at the speed of life, and began wondering if I was okay with the trajectory at which my own life was hurtling forward. Was I going to make a significant contribution? Was life turning out the way I had expected, was I missing out on important opportunities, and why was I feeling anxious, as if that great white shark was circling again?

At sixty, I can say that I am far more comfortable with my mortality, so Psalm 90 is no longer the "Downer Psalm". I have clarity that I don't have "plenty of time," that my days are numbered, that my life is moving fast -- a bit like the end of an old fast forward cassette tape -- but most importantly of all, I have discovered what Tim Keller

calls the "freedom of self forgetfulness." At sixty, I have stopped thinking I have anything to prove, and feel a little silly that I worked so hard as a young man to impress people with how smart I was and how successful I was, and how important my life was.

The Freedom of Self Forgetfulness is the freedom that comes from living life with an understanding of the real context into which we are to frame our lives. Real context means my life is part of a larger story. In fact, the story is not even mainly about me. "Before the mountains were born, or you gave birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God." (Psalm 90:2) The most liberating notion I have discovered is that I have been invited into the eternal story that began in eternity past and stretches forward into eternity future 'from everlasting to everlasting'. And my life intersects eternity for just a brief moment – like a watch in the night.

So what I ask my self regularly is simply this: "are you living for what lasts or what fades away?" Are you living to the full extent of your gifts and energy or are you coasting? Are you living for what is "unseen and eternal" or what you can see and control—things that can be lost?

Many sixty year olds are living for retirement, or they are chasing their kids or their grandchildren around the country, hanging on for dear life to the "seen and temporal". I get it. I often fantasize about it!

But when I am thinking clearly, I want to leave a legacy of people – my own children and grandchildren to be sure. But I also want to leave in the wake of my life, a legacy of people who are living for the unseen and eternal. "You have been our dwelling place for all generations" means my "home" is living in the presence of God every day of my life, delighting in his incomparable perfections and glory. When I do this, I forget about myself, and think about my grandsons Roman and Cruz, and hope that they discover the Context of Eternity that changes everything.