



## CREATIVE CAMPAIGN SERMONS FOR ONE MONTH TO LIVE

### SERMON 1: LIVING THE DASH (An Overview of the Campaign)

- Suggested Videos: Suggested to play the Sermon Bumper Video to set up the campaign and sermon series just before the sermon is preached. The bumper includes Man on the Street (funny and serious selections; Video of man dying of cancer w/ 6 weeks to live at close of message.)
- Pastors will want to challenge their congregants to do the following throughout this campaign:
  1. Take the 30 Day Challenge by asking the question, *“What would you do if you had one month to live?”* Note that this is a “clarifying question”. It will help to focus your listeners on the One Month to Live Challenge and clarify their priorities and purpose throughout the next 30 days together.
  2. Get into a Challenge Group and share the 30 day experience in community with others once a week. This could be a home group, office group, coffee shop or Sunday School.
  3. Read a Chapter a day in the book *One Month To Live* and journal personal thoughts and experiences. These journal entries will provide opportunity to share their experiences, thoughts and feelings. Note that the book is written in 30 chapters to be read as a daily devotional guide for “your 30 day journey”.

### LIVING THE DASH – SUGGESTED MESSAGE OUTLINE & MANUSCRIPT

#### LIVING THE DASH Part 1 of Series: One Month To Live

***“I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.”***  
John 10:10b (The Msg)

#### 1. JESUS LIVED PASSIONATELY

***“And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.”*** 1 John 5:11-12 (NIV)

***“To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: ‘We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry.’”*** Luke 7:31,32 (NIV)

#### 2. JESUS LOVED COMPLETELY

***“Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of His love.”***  
John 13:1 (NIV)

***“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your***



*mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"*  
Matt. 22:37-39 (NIV)

*"Love never fails..."* 1 Cor. 13:8 (NIV)

### 3. JESUS LEARNED HUMBLY

*"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!"*  
Phil. 2:5-8 (NIV)

*"In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success."*  
Prov. 3:6 (LB)

Give God...

- The First Day of Every Week
- The First Part of Every Day
- The First Portion of My Income
- The First Consideration of Every Decision

### 4. JESUS LEFT BOLDLY

*"As the time approached for Him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."*  
Luke 9:51 (NIV)

*"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"*  
Matt. 25:23 (NIV)

#### MANUSCRIPT:

##### Intro.

Perhaps no place echoes with eternity quite like a cemetery. Not surprisingly, I'm fascinated by old gravestones and the lives they represent. The dates on some of the old monuments and grave markers in the Houston area where I live go back to the eighteen hundreds. My imagination launches me into the various stories the markers tell. I find myself pondering what life was like in the 1800's or early 1900's. I know people back then had the same problems and pain as everyone does in life, but I wonder if they felt as stressed and pressured as I do. Our technology and modern conveniences have revolutionized our twenty-first century lives but at what price?

Looking at old tombstones, I can't help but recognize that entire lives are now reduced before me to two dates and one little dash. Some monuments include facts or sayings, Bible verses or poignant memorials, but each person's life really comes down to what transpired between those two dates. It comes down to what's in the dash. I look at the dash of a particular person's marker and wonder, *What did he live for? Whom did she love? What were his passions and dreams? What were her biggest mistakes and greatest regrets?*



When you think about it, we don't have control over many things in life. We didn't get to decide where we were born, who our parents are, or which time period and culture we face. We don't get to decide the dates on our gravestone. We don't know when our time on this earth will be up. It could be next week or next year or decades away. Only God knows. Our lives are in His hands. But there is one thing we have a vast amount of control over. We get to decide how we're going to use our dash.

You get to choose how to spend that little dash of time between the two dates of your earthly existence. What are you spending yours on? Are you living the dash, knowing fully who you are and why you're here? Or dashing to live, hurriedly spending precious time chasing things that really don't matter to you?

We're starting a new series today, a spiritual growth campaign; we're calling One Month To Live – 30 Days to a No-Regrets Life. As a pastor for over twenty years now I have had the privilege to minister to many people in the last months and days of their lives. I noticed some common characteristics in each one. When they knew they only had a few months or weeks to live they had an amazing clarity about how they would spend their time. They focused on their relationships, saying the things they had always wanted to say. They forgave and ask for forgiveness. They didn't waste time on insignificant daily routines but made the absolute most of their time left.

If you knew you had one month to live, your life would be radically transformed! But why do we wait until we're diagnosed with cancer or we lose a loved one to accept this knowledge and allow it to free us? Don't we want all that our life has to offer? Don't we want to fulfill the purpose for which we were created? Wouldn't life be a lot more satisfying if we lived this way?

In this series we are going to be challenged to live life as though we only had one month to live. That's what this series will be all about. I want to challenge you to live the next 30 days as if they were your last – not because you're going to die in a month, Lord willing you are going to live many, many more months and years. The point is if you live the next 30 days as if they were your last then you'll know how to really live! Over the next several weeks together we will discover four universal principles that will transform the question, "*What would you do if you had one month to live?*"; into an amazing lifestyle of meaning and purpose. These four universal principles can be seen in the life of Christ. Think about it. Jesus knew when you had 30 days until the cross. What did He do when He knew He had one month to live? From His life we discover four universal principles that will enable us to really live our dash instead of just dashing to live. He lived passionately, He loved completely, He learned humbly and He left boldly. That's why He came. Look at what He said in John 10:10. "*I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of.*" (Msg.)

This was the way Christ lived His life on earth. He showed us four universal principles to live the life God made us for.

**PRINCIPLE 1: JESUS LIVED PASSIONATELY.** Would you underline the phrase *better life*? Maybe right now your life stinks or maybe your life is really good right now. God wants you to live the *better life* where you are fully who He made you to be. Where you are more of you than you have ever been. Where you are living the life that God has called you to. It's the better life. God lays it out there for you. He says I have the better life for you than you can even imagine. You can experience that life now! 1 John 5:11-12 tell us how. "*And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.*" John was sort of like Howie Mandell here in Deal or No Deal. He says the choice is yours and it's a pretty clear cut choice. Life or Death -- Deal or No Deal. He says you can live your life the way you were made to live. You can be fully alive. You can really live and not just exist, but to live passionately you must have the Son of God! Deal or No Deal. I believe that this campaign can be the greatest adventure of your life. The greatest experience of spiritual growth in your life. The greatest opportunity of blessing in your life. The greatest chance to impact the lives of others from your life. I believe this can be the greatest decision of your life, but it really comes down to the choice you make to live the life that you were made for. But then Satan acts



as the banker of the game show of life and he calls in and he doesn't say that's a bad deal God offers you. He offers you the better life. Don't take that. Take my offer, the miserable life. That would be an easy choice. He says you know, God's offer is really pretty good. He does offer you the better life and you really ought to take it, just not today. Do that some day. Maybe you are thinking about becoming a believer, committing your life to Christ and you think, yeah, that's what I need to do. Commit my life to Christ and Satan will say you should, you should really commit your life to Christ, but not today, some day. Some day down the road. Some day you should commit your life to Christ, just not today, it's not a good day for you. Or maybe you are a believer and you're really thinking about totally surrendering everything to the Lord, really living all out for Him. Really giving Him your complete self, risking it all for Him. Getting really involved in the church. Getting really involved in the work of God. You think I really need to do that and Satan says you really should, but not today. It's not a good time for you. It's a busy time in your life right now. Maybe some day when things settle down a little bit. God's favorite word is today. Satan's favorite word is some day. We get stuck in what I call the some day syndrome. We say some day when things settle down I'll really live for God. Some day when this problem gets out of my life then we'll really be happy. Some day when work is not so busy I'll spend more time with the kids. Some day when I get that promotion and I'm making more money then we'll really enjoy life. We get stuck in this some day syndrome. Folks, when are we going to wake up and realize this is life? It's beautiful and wonderful and painful and frightening and exhilarating and awe-inspiring all at the same time. This is life. This is your life, but we are constantly waiting to live. We're constantly waiting to live. We think some day then I'll really live. No, this is all you're got. Today. This is your life. Life moves so fast. It's gone before you know it. It's a precious, sacred gift that God gives us and I said it – you're still breathing. You still have a chance. You're still breathing so you still have this sacred gift of life that God has given us, but you have to take advantage of it. You have to make the choices to take advantage of it. Life moves so fast and it reminds me of that credit card commercial where the dad is pushing his little boy on the swing. He pushes him out and then when he comes back he's transformed into a 180-pound teenager that just clobbers his dad and just knocks him to the ground. Then it says life comes at you fast. I can relate to that. It seems just like the other day I was buckling my sons, Ryan and Josh, into their car seats. Now they buckle themselves in and drive off. Life comes at you fast. It seems like just the other day I was a young dad of pre-schoolers and I actually had hair. But life comes at you fast. Speaking of aging, I came across a comedian's take on aging that I really like. It says, "Do you realize that the only time in our lives when we like to get old is when we're kids. If you are less than ten years old you are so excited about aging that you think in fractions. How old are you? I'm four and a half. You are never  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . You are four and a half going on five. That's the key. You get into your teens and now they can't hold you back. You jump to the next number, even a few ahead. How old are you? I'm going to be 16 and you could be 13, but hey you are going to be 16. Then the greatest day of your life. You become 21. Even the words sound like a ceremony. You become 21. Yes, but then you turn 30. Ooh, what happened there. Makes you sound like bad milk. He turned, we had to throw him out. There is no fun now, you just soured. What's wrong? What's changed? You become 21. You turn 30 and then you are pushing 40. Whoa, put on the brakes. It's all slipping away. Before you know it you reach 50 and your dreams are gone. But wait, you make it to 60. You didn't think you would, but you make it. So you become 21, turn 30, push 40, reach 50 and make it to 60. You built up so much speed now that you hit 70. After that it's a day-to-day thing. You hit Wednesday. You get into your 80's and every day is a complete cycle. You hit lunch. You turn 4:30. You reach bedtime. It doesn't end there. Into the 90's you start going backwards. I was just 92 and then a strange thing happens if you make it over 100 you become a little kid again. I'm 100%." I hope everyone of us lives to be 100%, but even if you do, life moves so fast and the years just fly by. We better understand that these years are precious. The day is precious and we better start making the choices to live because life is painful and life is beautiful all at the same time. This is your life. Stop constantly waiting to live and start living, living the life that you were made to live. I want you to look at a passage that really intrigues me that Jesus talked about in Luke 7:31. He talked about His generation. He says, "To what, then, can I compare the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling out to each other: 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry.'" Jesus is saying we played the music of life for you, but you didn't dance. You didn't enjoy life. You were always waiting to live. You were always stuck in the some day syndrome. Then when the pain and the problems came your way you didn't cry, you didn't experience life; you tried to avoid all risk at all costs. You didn't live. I put you on this earth and gave you the most sacred gift of all, the gift of life and you didn't use it.



You didn't live. You were always waiting to live. We vastly overestimate the power of tomorrow and we get stuck in the some day syndrome. Then we vastly overestimate the power of yesterday and we get stuck in our guilt and our past regrets. John Maxwell, for years, has kept a sign on his desk that simply says "yesterday ended last night." He says it reminds him of no matter how badly I failed in the past, it's done and today is a new day. No matter what goals I've accomplished, they have little direct impact on what I do today. The power of today. So first I start living. I have to choose to start living passionately. The greatest risk is not risking. Not living. The second greatest risk is the second thing we're going to talk about. You were made to love and the second greatest risk is loving. I have to

**PRINCIPLE TWO: JESUS LOVED COMPLETELY.** Look at what Jesus did when He knew He had only a short time left with His disciples in John 13:1 (NIV) *"Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of His love."* If you knew you only had one month to live you would want to do the same thing. You would want to love completely. You would say the things you've always wanted to say and do the things you've always wanted to do. You focus on your relationships and express your love to those closest to you.

It sounds real simple, but it's profound. The reason why you are placed on this earth is to love and you're never living until you're loving. Jesus summed up the entire Bible in a couple of verses in Matthew 22:37-39, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself."* It's saying love God first and love others like yourself. At the end of your life it won't matter how much money is in your bank account, it won't matter how many awards you've won, it won't matter how many goals you've achieved, all that will matter is did you love? Did you love the people in your life. Did you love God with all your heart? That's the only thing that's going to matter one day. What if you knew this was going to be the last month you would be on this earth? What if you knew you only had one month left to live? How would you live your life? How would you change the way you are living right now? If you knew you only had one month left to live I think you would really focus on relationships. Your relationship with God and growing closer to Him, getting ready to meet God. Your family, your friends, making a lasting impact on the lives of others. If you knew you only had one month left to live, how would you live your life? If you live your life this month as if this is the last month of your life you will have learned how to live. At the end of this month you will have learned how to live. I challenge you. Live your life this month as if it's your last. As if you have one month left to live. Then at the end of this month you'll know how to live because that's the way you should live. If you live your life that way you'll be a huge success. Why? 1 Cor. 13:8 tells us. *"Love never fails ...."* That's why. If you love completely, you will not fail. If you want to succeed in your business let love be your primary motivation and your primary goal. You want to succeed in life? Let love be your primary motivation because love never fails. You want to succeed in your family? Let love and loving your family be your primary goal. Love never fails. If love is your goal. You cannot fail. You will not fail if love is your goal. Every week I have to ask myself why am I doing this today? Why am I doing this? Because I love God and I love people. I cannot fail. I cannot fail. Check your motives every week, every single week. Why do you do what you do in your business? Why do you do what you do in your life? Is it motivated by love? By the way, love is not a syrupy feeling. Love is an action. Love is a choice. Live your life out of love. So, let me ask you. Who do you need to tell today that you love them? Do it today. All the flowers at their funeral won't mean a thing. Who is it today that you need to show that you love them? An act of love. Love is an action. Who do you need to show love to? Love is not love until you give it away. Who do you need to give love away to today so it can become real? God placed you on this earth to love and you'll never live until you love.

Jesus showed His disciples the full extent of His love by doing something simple. He washed their feet. In this 30 day challenge, I want to challenge you to think about the simple little things that can make a big difference. A minor change can make a major difference in letting someone know you really love them.



- **Suggested Video story of Man who took his son a Happy Meal at his school lunch**

Then I was made to learn. I want us to move to the third case. I was made to learn but I have to

**PRINCIPLE 3: JESUS LEARNED HUMBLY.** Even though Jesus was God He taught us by His own example how to learn humbly. In Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV) the bible says, *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!"* Would you underline the phrase He humbled Himself and became obedient to death. The writer of Hebrews tells us that *Jesus learned obedience from what He suffered.* Jesus learned humbly though He was God. He could have remained in heaven with all of its splendor in all of His glory as God Himself, yet He humbled Himself and became a man, taking on the very nature of a servant and became obedient unto death on a cross. What an example of humility!

This verse challenges us to be the same as Christ. You were made to learn to be more like Christ. You were made to become more like Him. I'm talking about character building. The only thing you can take with you to Heaven is your character. You can't take anything else with you, but you take your character into Heaven. This earth is a preparation ground where God is building our character to make us more like Himself, to get us ready for eternity.

There are only two things that build your character. Number one is God's Word, really digging into God's Word. It builds your character. I challenge you to spend time in God's Word, really dig into God's Word. I think it's so important for us to find a Bible reading plan and dig into it. Get in-depth into God's Word. Dig into God's Word. Put God's Word into your life. There are only two things that will change your life. The books you read and the people you meet. You meet God and hang out with God and spend time with God and get into His Word and read His book, it will change your life. You'll become more like Him. You become more like the people you hang around so hang around God. Get into His Word.

The second thing that builds my character is problems. I like God's Word a whole lot better than problems. I don't know about you. I said that I believe that this One Month To Live Campaign is going to be the greatest blessing in your life ever, but I didn't say it would be problem-free. Some of the greatest blessings in our lives are disguised as problems. Some of you are going through the most difficult problems you've ever gone through. I find that life moves on two tracks. There are great things happening in my life and then there are tough and bad things happening in my life all at the same time. So everyone of you have problems. If you have a pulse you have problems. Everyone of you have painful things going on in your life right now. But here's the good news. Those problems can't stop God's plan for you. God wants to use those problems to make you more like His Son, to build your character for your own good, for my own good. That's what God is doing. So keep turning to Him during the problems, during the pain and say God take this problem out of my life. God says, "No, I'm going to just take you through the problem." God change my circumstance and God says, "No, I'm going to change you instead." That's so much better when God changes us to make us more like His Son. You allow God to work through your problems by turning to Him and you get into God's Word and this will be the greatest adventure you've ever had. I want you to look at Proverbs 3:6. It's a great verse. It says, *"In everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success."* Underline that word success. How many of you want to be successful? Raise your hand. Yeah. It's a good desire, but I have to let you know this word for success in the Hebrew doesn't mean what we think success is. We think of success as monetary success, financial success. That's not what this means. The word for success here in this passage in the Hebrew literally means the ability to make wise decisions. That's what you need more than anything else. For everything comes out of that ability to make wise decisions. You are going to face some tough decisions in your life. You need the ability to make wise decisions in your business, in your family, in your relationships. You need the ability to make wise decisions in your life. It says here if you will put God first you can't go wrong. He won't let you go wrong. Have you ever made a bad decision? Oh man, I've made some bad decisions. We've all made some bad decisions, but God says if I will put Him first He'll give me the ability to make wise decisions.



My dad gave me years ago a little formula for putting God first. I like to give it out every new year at Fellowship of The Woodlands. This is kind of my daily and weekly agenda to keep my priorities in line. I put God first by giving Him the first day of every week. Give God **The First Day of Every Week**. Either Saturday night or Sunday morning. Give God an hour of all the hours of your week say God I'm going to put You first. Make it a priority. God says I want you to give me that first day of the week. Just an hour. It helps me recalibrate my life and my priorities and when I give God the first hour He blesses all the other hours. Then give God **The First Part of Every Day**. Spend 15 or 20 minutes with God every day reading God's Word, writing down what you learned, praying about what's coming up in your day. Sometimes I say God, I'm too busy today, but then I realize no, I have to spend time with God. When I do and put Him first in my day He just helps me get more done. He expands my day. He blesses the rest of my day. Put God first in your day. Then give God **The First Portion of My Income**. Put God first. Give back the first part. That first 10% and tithe because if God's not first place in your finances He's not first place in your life. Then give God **The First Consideration of Every Decision**. Have you ever bought a car without praying about it? It was a lemon, wasn't it? Yeah. God wants you to pray about every single thing that goes on in your life. He wants you to pray about everything in your business, in your family, in your relationships. Pray about it. I always pray God, help me not make a mess of things. Close this door on me if it's not the right door. God give me the wisdom to make the right decision here and God says you can't go wrong. I'll give you the ability to make wise decisions. You were made to live passionately, you were made to love completely, you were made to learn humbly, but you were also made to leave boldly, so you have to make the choice right here and right now, today, to start leaving.

**PRINCIPLE 4: JESUS LEFT BOLDLY.** Not only did Jesus live passionately, love completely, learn humbly but He also left boldly. He was resolute in His mission on earth and knew why He was here. I love the sense of urgency I read in Luke 9:51 (NIV). It says, *"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."* There was no hesitation or reservation with Christ. He was resolute in fulfilling the purpose for which He came. If you knew you only had 30 days to live you would be resolved to finalize your purpose. You wouldn't waste time or energy on things that didn't really matter but you would look for ways to leave a lasting legacy. You would prepare for eternity. This earth is not your home. You were made for eternity and the Bible says God placed eternity in our hearts. Everyone of us knows that we were made for eternity deep down in our hearts. Even an Atheist knows deep down in their heart that they were made for eternity. There is something that tells us there is more to life than just the here and now. We all realize that inherently. We were made to leave. We were made for eternity. We were also made to leave a legacy. One of the greatest bearers that keeps us from leaving a legacy is trying to please everyone else. Trying to live our lives for everyone else's approval. Look what this verse in Matthew 25:23 says. *"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'"* A lot of people tell you how to live your life, but at the end of your life there is only one opinion that matters. That Audience of One – your Heavenly Father saying well done. Saying hey, you lived the life you were made for. God is not going to look at you and say why weren't you more like Pastor Kerry? He's not going to look at you and say why weren't you more like Billy Graham? You should have been like Billy Graham. God's not going to look at you and say why weren't you more like this guy or that gal? He's going to say why weren't you more of who I made you to be? Why weren't you more of you? Why didn't you live the life I made you to live? What I want God to say more than anything is well done. Kerry, you sure didn't have it all together and you made a lot of mistakes, but you were fully you. You were fully who I made you to be and that gave me pleasure. Well done good and faithful servant. I heard the story about a high school football player who was the second string linebacker and hardly every played. He only played on the kick-off team and then he would play when his team got way ahead, they would send him in with the scrubs. But it was the last game of his senior year and he stormed into the coaches' office and he had this sense of urgency about him. He said, "Coach, you've got to let me start. You've just got to let me start. You've got to let me start tonight." The coach said, "I can't make any promises." You see this boy didn't play a whole lot, but his dad was like most other dads, he came to every game. He was there no matter what even if his son played little or none he was always there rooting and cheering his son on. He was like most dads in that way, but he was unlike most dads in that he was blind. Every though his son didn't play a lot, he never saw him play, but he was always there to cheer for him. He was always there and his presence was always felt even though he was blind. But this young man begged and begged



and begged the coach until finally right before the game the coach said, "Okay, I'll let you play the first series." Well, that young man went in and he was fired up to play. They handed it off to the fullback and bam, he just slammed that fullback behind the line of scrimmage and stopped the play. The very next play the quarterback went back to pass and this young linebacker blitzed and sacked the quarterback. He played the rest of the game. He ended up with over 20 tackles and at the end of the game as he came running off the field the coach grabbed him by the helmet and he said, "Son, what got into you? He said that's one of the greatest games I've ever seen a high school linebacker play. I don't get it. What happened?" He said, "Well, coach, you know my dad who comes to every game and he's blind?" The coach said, "Yeah, I know who your dad is. Yeah, I know all about that." He said, "Well, my dad died last night and this is the first game he's ever seen me play. That's why I had to play." He said, "I was playing for him. I was playing for him and it made all the difference." So, who are you playing for? Are you playing for toys, for possessions? Who are you playing for? What are you playing for? Are you playing for pleasure? Are you playing for pats on the back? Are you playing so that people can say you're a good guy? Who are you playing for? The only one that really matters is the One who made you, the coach who made you and who put you in the game. Your Heavenly Father. He's the only One that really matters and Him saying well done.

- **Suggested video clip of man dying of cancer with 6 weeks to live**

I want to challenge you to take the 30 day challenge. This was just the introduction. Next week we start the challenge to live the next 30 days as if we only had one month to live. Here's what I want to challenge you to do:

- 1. Ask the question everyday, "What would I do if I only had one month to live?"**
- 2. Read a chapter in the book *One Month To Live* each day. There are 30 chapters, one for each day as a daily devotional and journal your experiences over the next 30 days as you take this challenge. Record the changes in your life and what God is doing in and through you.**
- 3. Get in a Challenge Group for the next 6 weeks and share your experiences with others. This could be a home group, office group, Sunday School class or coffee shop gathering.**

You're never really ready to live until you are ready to leave so let me ask you. Are you ready to leave? If you knew you were going to die tonight do you know you'd go to Heaven? Are you ready to leave? I hope you'll trust Christ if you haven't. Not because you might die tonight, but because you'll probably wake up in the morning and you'll need God. We need God desperately every day.

Closing Prayer with challenge to trust Christ.



## CREATIVE CAMPAIGN SERMONS FOR ONE MONTH TO LIVE

### SERMON 2: LIVE PASSIONATELY (Principle One)

- Suggested Videos: Suggested sermon bumper video before the message w/ Man on the Street (funny and serious selections; Movie clip from Father of The Bride w/ Steve Martin; also video of single mom who journals her daily bible studies and visual of [www.OneMonthToLive.com](http://www.OneMonthToLive.com).; Video of man and his wife who had the heart attack and/or story of woman at bakery who was held at gunpoint.)
- Pastors will want to challenge their congregants to do the following throughout this campaign:
  1. Take the Thirty Day Challenge to Live Passionately asking the question, "What would I do if I knew I only had one month to live?"
  2. Use the One Month To Live wrist bands as a reminder to log on daily to [www.OneMonthToLive.com](http://www.OneMonthToLive.com)
  3. Blog their thirty day journey on the website of what they would do if they had one month to live and how they are doing.

### LIVE PASSIONATELY – SUGGESTED MESSAGE OUTLINE & MANUSCRIPT

#### LIVE PASSIONATELY Part 2 of Series: One Month To Live

*"So love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy." Mark 12:30 (Msg)*

*"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord." Rom. 12:11 (NIV)*

#### 1. DO SOMETHING DRASTIC

*"Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven ... But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralyzed man, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, 'We have seen remarkable things today.'"*

Luke 5:18-20; 24-26 (NIV)

#### The Clarifying Question:

**"If you knew you had one month to live, how would you live your life?"**



- Realize what's important
- Remove the obstacles

## 2. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

*"When Jesus saw their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'"*  
5:20 (NIV)

## 3. CREATE GOD SPACE

*"... into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus."*  
Luke 5:19b (NIV)

*"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for Him, and when they found Him, they exclaimed: 'Everyone is looking for You!' Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else....'"*  
Mark 1:35-38a (NIV)

*"Reverence for God adds hours to each day...."*  
Prov. 10:27 (LB)

## 4. KEEP A CONSTANT REMINDER

*"... He said to the paralyzed man, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.'"*  
Luke 5:24b (NIV)

*"Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God."* Luke 5:25 (NIV)

*"Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth."*  
Psalm 46:10 (NIV)



## MANUSCRIPT:

### Intro.

We've just begun an exciting and life changing series we're calling One Month To Live – 30 Days To A No-Regrets Life and today we are going to examine the first principle for a no-regrets life – how to live passionately.

Nothing great ever happens without passion. The driving force behind all great art, all great music, all great literature, all great drama, all great architecture is passion. Passion is what makes things great. Passion propels athletes to break records. Passion pushes scientists to discover new cures for diseases. Passion is what gives life. The kind of life you were made to live! So, I want you to take out your outlines and let's look at our very first verse. It's Mark 12:30. *"So love the Lord God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence and energy."* Circle the word passion because God wants you to love Him with passion. God wants you to live a life of passion. God created you to be a passionate person. You were made with the capacity for passion because God is a passionate God. He feels things so deeply. Regardless of your personality, God made you to be a passionate person. You may be extroverted or you may be introverted, it doesn't really matter. God made you to feel things deeply. I know a lot of people who are more introverted and they say, "Well, God didn't make me to be passionate." Yes He did. He made you to feel things deeply, regardless of your personality because God is a passionate God. My wife was in the car with my eight year son, Stephen, the other day. Stephen did something to remind her of me and she said, "Stephen, you are daddy's boy." He said, "No, I'm not." She said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "Well, I'm not really related to dad." She said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "Well, I'm related to you, but I'm not related to dad?" She said, "What do you mean by that?" He said, "Well, I'm related to you because you had me. Dad's just married to you." When I heard that I was thinking, son, we've got to have a talk. I've let this go a little too long. I put this off. Unfortunately I have to tell you, you are related to me whether you like it or not. You're totally related to me. One of the reasons why we lose our passion is life is we forget who made us. We forgot whose we are. The God who made you is an extremely passionate God and He made you to be a passionate person. Look at Romans 12:11. *"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord."* Circle that word "keep" because what that tells me is that passion is something that you can lose. You have to work at keeping your passion. You can lose your passion for the Lord. You can lose your passion for life. God created every one of us to be passionate people, but the problem is, life just tends to beat the passion right out of you. The problems and the pressures and the stresses of life sort of drain the passion right out of our lives. But, God wants us to be passionate people.

Howard Thurman said, "Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive, and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive." I love that quote because it challenges me to live with passion. But I have to admit it's not easy. There are so many things that crowd into my life that threaten to steal my passion for life. I sort of naturally gravitate to an overcrowded schedule. Maybe you do too. How many of you feel right now like you don't have enough time to get everything done by the end of the day? Raise your hand. How many are just too tired to raise your hand? Raise your hand, yeah. That's why I've started a new series that we all need I'm calling *One Month To Live*. If you really live your life as though you only had one month to live you would rediscover your passion. This One Month To Live campaign we are taking will help create margin in your crowded lives that so often rob you from living passionately. Dr. Richard Swenson in his landmark book "Margin" says margin is the difference between your load and your limit. The less margin you have in life the more stress you'll experience in your life. It's like trying to read a book with no spaces between the words and no margins on the page. A life without margin is just like that. Without margin, without space, sentences are chaotic and incomprehensible and a life without margin is chaotic and incomprehensible. When I put a little margin and space in my life it all makes sense again. But most of us live our lives without any margin at all. We have no margin physically. We don't get enough rest. We don't eat right and exercise. We have no margin in our schedules. Our calendars are crowded. We have no margin in our finances. We just live from paycheck to paycheck. We have absolutely no margin in our lives and we wonder why we feel so stressed and lose our passion in life. We get so busy in the details that we miss the most important things in life. It kind of reminds me of Steve Martin in his movie *Father of The Bride* when he was trying to connect with his daughter before she left the reception but couldn't get through all the people and stuff in his house. Just watch.



- **Suggested Movie clip** (Steve Martin, Father of the Bride clip with Steve looking for his daughter at the crowded reception to give her a hug goodbye but couldn't get through the crowds of people. As he gives up disappointed she finds him.)

I think the story in Luke chapter 5 must have been something like that. Jesus is in the middle of a packed house with people everywhere, yet the one who needed Jesus the most couldn't get close to Him. Let's read the story, *"Some men came carrying a paralytic on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven ... But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins....' He said to the paralyzed man, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.' Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, 'We have seen remarkable things today.'"* Luke 5:18-20; 24-26 (NIV)

I just love this passage and seeing the focus and determination and intentionality of these friends. I mean, nothing was going to stop them and their goal of getting their friend to Jesus. The way this passage ends with *we have seen remarkable things today* makes me think what would it take for all of us today to go home saying we have seen remarkable things today. Wouldn't it be awesome, wouldn't it be remarkable if all of us could, by the end of the day, decide we are going to focus on the things that count. We are going to have that same kind of passion and intentionality in our lives that we see in this passage.

These guys were trying to get their friend to Jesus so he could be healed, but they ran into a problem in verse 19 where it says they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd. That's the worst thing about a crowded life. It keeps me from being close to Christ. I can always tell in my life when it's too crowded in my schedule and I'm too overloaded because I start just going through the motions in my walk with Christ. My soul begins to dry up. My emotions get numb. I'm just going through the motions in my walk with Christ. I began to quit living passionately and just start existing. This is probably the greatest sin in our congregation, a life without passion, no longer living, just existing. The reason why it's a sin is because it keeps us from being close to Christ and having that rich, abiding love relationship with the God who created us. The crowd will keep you from Christ and a crowded life will keep you from Christ. So I've got to stop and do what these guys did to break through the crowd. If you want to recapture your passion in life I want to challenge you to do what these guys did.

**1. DO SOMETHING DRASTIC.** These guys did. In verse 19 it says, *"When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus."* So the crowd was keeping them from Christ so they did something drastic. They tore a hole in the roof. I'd say that's pretty drastic, wouldn't you? Whenever your life gets overcrowded you can't just do a couple of little things and expect your life to change. You can't make just two or three little alterations in your schedule and expect everything to be different. It doesn't work that way. You've got to stop and do something drastic because we naturally gravitate to an overloaded lifestyle. If you are going to restore the passion in your life you need stop and ask the drastic question. **It's a clarifying question.** Today I could teach you some time management principles, we all need that. But really our problem is not time management. Our problem is life management. I want to challenge you to ask a drastic question every day to really get down to the root of the problem. Here's the question. If you knew you had one month to live how would you live your life? If you lived the next 30 days as if they were your last I think you'll know how to really live. If you knew you had one month to live how would you live your life? What would you do? What would you not do? When people find out that they have a short time left to live on this earth, they suddenly realize what matters most and it's relationships. Suddenly people are set free and they say the things that they wish they would have always said. They do the things that maybe had been on their to do list for years that were important to them, but they never got around to it because life was too busy. Well, guess what? Now they make time. They ask for forgiveness from others and they give forgiveness freely to anyone who asks. Their lives are revolutionized in their last days. Suddenly, instantly, instinctively their vision is clarified. They see the



big picture. They get it. They do the things they wish they would have always done. If this is what happens to everyone when they find out that their days are numbered then why don't we live this way all the time? Really we all know our days are numbered. Why don't we start living like that now? When Chris and I started to do that it revolutionized our lives. Just little things that I did that I would have never done before, I started doing and getting in the habit of doing it. That's the whole point. You probably have a lot more than one month to live. You probably have many months and many years so why not really learn how to live and the way you do that is ask a drastic question. What would I do if I had one month to live? That's how you should always live. So it just changed us forever. One of the things that was really heavy on our heart was to do something that would make an impact. Everything we did at church we started thinking about how that would make a difference years from now, an eternal difference. It started really clarifying our priorities to leave a lasting legacy. We don't have it all together by any means and we struggle with an overcrowded life and balancing it all, but this has really cut through all the periphery and gotten us right down to the heart of what life is all about. It has helped us tremendously because when you start asking that drastic question, the first thing that happens is you **realize what's important**. You realize what's important. That's exactly what happened to these friends. They realized what's important. They knew it was their last chance to get their friend to Jesus to be healed. That they'd probably never get another chance so they knew their time was limited. When you know your time is limited, you immediately realize what's important. You see, they tore a hole through the roof to get their friend to Jesus and do whatever it took to get him to Christ. I'm sure when they were tearing a hole in the roof they weren't thinking we're going to have to pay for this roof, but they didn't really care because it's just a roof. So many of us get stuck on the roof and we worry about all this stuff that's just not going to last. The more stuff you have the more you have to worry about. We focus on all these things that don't really matter and they won't last five years from now much less for all eternity. We forget about the things that really do matter like the people in our lives. These guys put their friend over the roof. They said it's just a roof. You can replace a roof, but we've got to get our friend to Jesus. They realized what was important. They were passionate about it. Then when you ask this clarifying question you start removing obstacles.

That's the second thing you have to do if you are going to start living this one month to live lifestyle. **Remove the obstacles**. You decide what's important and then you cut out everything else. These guys in this passage removed the roof. That was an obstacle and they removed it. We need to be that drastic in our own lives. Now what Chris and I have found that gets difficult and kind of sticky about this is that I might have a list of about 20 things to do and they are all good things. They're all good. There's not like a bad thing on there. They are all good things. But if I'm going to really do well and really be focused I'm only going to get a few things done right. So, how do I decide? How do I choose between all these things I have to do? I want to give you a little trick to figure out what's the most important thing in your life. How do you focus in on the most important thing? This is it. The really important things in your life, the things that you would focus on if you knew your time was limited are not the things that come with bells and whistles. They aren't the things that have a deadline. They aren't the things that you'll be rewarded for if you do. In fact, almost certainly they will go unnoticed and unpraised if you do choose to do them. There are things like taking the time to tuck your kids in to bed at night. Taking the time to really listen to them when they talk. Spending that time having coffee or taking a walk with your spouse. Not to try to figure out your calendars, not to figure out when you are going to have repairs done on the house, but just to connect, to tell each other how much you mean to one another. There are things that don't have a deadline and for that reason we rarely get them done because our schedules are always full. Our Daytimers are packed with things that have to be done that day or preferably last week. We didn't get them down and they've all fallen over and what happens is the important things are completely missed out on, they're silent. So what we encourage you to do and what we're trying to do in our own lives is to figure out what's really important, cut out everything else and do the things that really matter most. As we do we are rediscovering the passion in our lives and relationships.

So, you realize what's important, you remove the obstacles, you're doing something drastic. You can't just do one or two other things. You've got to do something drastic to get out of this uncrowded lifestyle to live passionately. But then secondly you need to



**2. EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED.** You prioritize your life based on what's important.

You plan. You come up with your plan, but things don't always go as planned. Life interrupts you. There will always be things that come into your life that are crazy and hectic. That's when you have to lighten up your attitude and just say God, I give it to You. I know You're in control because our greatest problem of surviving a busy schedule is trying to control every little thing. Really that's playing God, so when I realize God, You're ultimately in control. I need to plan. I need to prioritize, but when my plans get messed up I realize You're still in control. That's what happened with these guys. They brought their friend to Jesus. They had made their plan. They knew where Jesus would be. They knew when He would be there. They had this perfect plan to get their friend healed, but when they got there they realized things hadn't gone as planned. They hadn't planned on a packed house. They realized there was no way they could really get to the front door so there was no way they could get their friend to Jesus. They could have said, well, let's give up, we tried, it was just not our day. Sorry buddy we tried to get you to Jesus, but it's not going to work out. We really gave it a good effort. But they didn't do that. They just changed their plans. Whenever your plans change it's passion that makes you roll with the punches and you give it to God and you come up with a new plan and you get creative. These guys got creative and they went through the roof. When they lowered their friend down right in front of Jesus, Jesus did something very unexpected. Look what He did in verse 20. *"When Jesus saw their faith, He said, 'Friend, your sins are forgiven.'"* Now he was expecting Jesus to heal him. The whole reason they got him to Christ is so that Christ could heal the paralytic, but what happens is Jesus says first I'm going to forgive your sins. It was totally unexpected. That man could have said, Jesus, don't you get it? I'm lying here on a mat. I can't walk. That's great that You are trying to forgive me of my sins, but don't worry about all that stuff, just heal me please. But he didn't do that. He received the unexpected. We need to learn how to receive the unexpected because Jesus knew what was best for him. He needed spiritual healing even more than he needed physical healing. So Jesus healed him spiritually first and then physically because God knows what's best for us more than we even know what's best for us. We have to come to the place where we make our plans, we decide what's important, we prioritize, but when life interrupts us we say God, You know what's best. I'm not going to sweat this. I'm not going to worry about this. I'm not going to try to control everything. The problem is we make our plans and we lay it all out and then when it gets interrupted we get really frustrated and really stressed. We begin to lose our passion. Whenever I'm stressed and worried and frustrated, it's just a warning light that goes off in my life that says I'm trying to control something that's uncontrollable. I'm trying to control something that God never meant for me to control. We have to allow God to interrupt our lives. Now it doesn't look like God usually. When they got to the packed house and it was so crowded it didn't look like this was a miracle of God, that the house was packed, it didn't look like a God thing at all. It just looked like a problem, but it became an opportunity. They began to change their plans. Jesus did something unexpected. We have to realize God is going to do things that are unexpected, He's unpredictable. We have an unpredictable God. We have to allow Him to do those unpredictable things and say God, You know what's best. I trust You. I'm going to give it up to You. I'm going to lighten up my attitude and I'm going to walk in faith and trust in You. Then you move to the third thing. You

**3. CREATE GOD SPACE.** In verse 19 it says that these men looked *"... into the middle*

*of the crowd, right in front of Jesus."* Their friend. Underline that phrase middle of the crowd. Right there in the middle of the crowd they created a space that wasn't there so that their friend could meet with Jesus. In the same way in the middle of our crowded, over-scheduled lives we have to create a space intentionally to meet with Jesus. Chris and I fall into this thing we call *when-then thinking*. That's when we say well, when things settle down we'll get around to that. When I'm not so busy I'll take care of those important things. But we realized something. This is our life. This is it. What we're living right now is our life and we can't fall into that old habit pattern of saying well, when things slow down, I'll get around to the important things. If we're not doing the important things now they are never going to get done. We've taken a great lesson from Jesus. Let's just look at how He handled this problem of making space in His life. In Mark it says, *"Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where He prayed. Simon and his companions went to look for Him, and when they found Him, they exclaimed: 'Everyone is looking for You!' Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else....'"* You see, even Jesus had to create space in His life, in His schedule so He could meet and talk alone with His Father. Even Jesus had to do that so we know we are going to have to do that. It says the disciples came running up and said, *"Jesus, where are You? Everyone is looking for You."* What they're saying



here is, Jesus, You are disappointing people. They're disappointed. You need to hurry and go meet their needs. There are some women and children and sick people and they are tired and they've walked a long way. You are disappointing them. They're expected You. But Jesus knew what was most important and He knew that He had to make the decision to leave and separate Himself from the crowd and to spend time alone with His Father. That's the secret of maintaining your passion in a crowded world. The most important one for us to spend time with isn't demanding, He waits patiently for us. It's out place to create a space to meet with God. Chris and I have finally figured out if there's nothing else we get done we need to have our time with God. If nobody else is pleased, we need to please God. When we focus on pleasing that audience of One then our priorities become crystal clear and we live with passion.

Whenever I get to that place where I have 100 things to do and I can't remember what they all are and I'm just so confused and I don't know what to do next, I always know to get alone with God, to create some space for God. I have to get alone, by myself, and turn all the television, the radio and everything off and just 15, 20, 30 minutes reading the Bible, writing down what God's teaching me, just listening to Him, just being quiet, just praying to Him, getting on my knees and saying God, You're going to have to do this through me because I'm confused, I don't know what's next, I know I'm overloaded, I've got a thousand things to do. I'm just not sure what to do next, but I do know I need to spend time with You. It's amazing when I do that how God begins to clarify everything and everything begins to fall in place. It seems like I just have more time in my day to get things done. Here's why, Proverbs 10:27 tells us, "*Reverence for God adds hours to each day . . .*" Do you need more time in your day? Put God first. God is the great multiplier. Sometimes I feel like I'm too busy to stop and spend time with God, but I'm too busy not to. When I stop and I give God 15, 20, 30 minutes in the morning before I rush off into my busy day somehow He just multiplies my time and I get it all done, everything I need to get done. There's enough time in the day to get done everything God wants you to get done. There's not enough time in your day to get done what everyone wants you to get done. So when I begin to please Him it's amazing how He multiplies my time. I don't understand it, but it's true. It's God's promise. "*Reverence for God adds Hours to each day . . .*" So if you don't know what to do next and you're thoroughly confused just get alone with God. That's the only thing that you need to know to do. Get alone with God. Mark that off your list and the rest of the list will take care of itself if you put God first.

**(Suggested Video of Single mom who journals her bible reading for her daughter to read later.)**

Well, there's a fourth thing that I think is real important to live passionately. It's to

**4. KEEP A CONSTANT REMINDER.** Keep a constant reminder. When I do these things and I ask the tough questions and I live this one month to live lifestyle then it's so important for me to keep a constant reminder of it because we so naturally can go back to an overcrowded life. Look at Luke 5:24. "*Jesus said to the paralyzed man, 'I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.'*" Now that's interesting to me because Jesus could have said get up, take your mat and throw it in the trash. You'll never need it again. But He didn't do that. Of course he never needed his mat again, but Jesus said, get up, take your mat and take that mat home with you. I think Jesus was saying let it be a reminder to you of the day that you overcame the crowd and got to Me. Let that be a reminder to you every day to see what I've done in your life. Probably he put it right up there in his living room and every day he would walk by and just smile and say I'll never need that again. Thank You, Jesus. It was a little reminder of the day that he overcame the crowd and got to Christ. We need a constant reminder to live this one month to live lifestyle and we've got some things for you that will really help you do this. First you need to ask the question every day, what would I do if I had one month to live. Second, read a chapter each day in the book *One Month to Live – 30 Days to a No-Regret Life*. Then join a challenge group and share your experience with others. And wear the wristband to remind you to log on to the website [OneMonthToLive.com](http://OneMonthToLive.com)

- **Suggest to use the One Month To Live wrist bands**

It's just a little reminder to constantly ask yourself that drastic question, if I had one month to live would I do



this, would I do that. I realize you can't just stop everything you're doing in your busy schedule. I understand that. But if you'll just do some main things by asking this question it'll change everything. Just watch what happens. Then read a chapter from the book *One Month To Live – Thirty Days to a No-Regrets Life* each day for the next thirty days as a daily devotional to keep you on track. There is also a website that will really help you out. It's [OneMonthToLive.com](http://OneMonthToLive.com) and there are all kinds of tools on the website. We want you to check into the website every day for 30 days to really help you stay accountable and we can learn from each other and help each other.

**(Suggested display of website for congregants to see and learn how to navigate daily from their own computers the OneMonthToLive.com lifestyle section.)**

Guys go ahead and put the website up. It's [OneMonthToLive.com](http://OneMonthToLive.com). I want to challenge you to log on to [OneMonthToLive.com](http://OneMonthToLive.com) everyday and check out the One Month To Live Lifestyle section. You will find all kinds of tools to help you go deeper in your spiritual walk, relational tips for improving your relationships, physical fitness and nutritional aids as well as financial counsel. You can even read through the One Year Bible on this site. I want you to submit your story and there is a place to submit your story on the blog.

- **Suggested Video of Man with heart attack who took the One Month To Live Challenge and his wife**

The four principles in the One Month To Live Lifestyle are universal but unique in expression. You'll do things that no one else will. Your experience will be unique to you but no matter who you are it will help you live passionately.

I love the phrase in this passage where it says "immediately". Luke 5:25 says, "Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God." That word immediately speaks to us today because we want to start today uncrowding our lives to restore our passion in life. We want to start today asking that question, what do I need to change in my life so that I'll have no regrets. That's our goal, to have no regrets. If we found out we had one month to live we wouldn't have regrets and think oh, I wish I would have taken care of all these relationships and the important things. We wouldn't have missed out on all the great things that we will have lived intentionally and fully the life that God intended for us. No we would **SAY IT NOW, DO IT NOW, and GIVE IT NOW**. We wouldn't put things off any longer. We would say the important things we need to say. We would do the things we've always wanted to do. And we would give forgiveness and ask forgiveness so we would leave with no regrets at the end of our 30 days.

- **Possible video story of woman at bakery who was held at gunpoint**

You can live passionately. That's the kind of lifestyle that we can live. A life of complete fullness and peace. Not crowded and rushed and hurried and always scared that we are missing out on something, but the fullness and peacefulness that comes from a life well lived. I'm convinced that there is only one place to start with that. Let's look at that last verse in your notes. "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." Maybe today you feel like you've forgotten who you are and whose you are. Life has become so crowded and rushed that you can't even remember what's important or why you are even living. The way to start remembering is to be still and remember who God is. I encourage you right now in this place. We are going to take a moment to be still, to do just that. Just draw a circle around yourself in your mind, imagine you're the only person here, take a deep breath and close your eyes if you want to, be still, stop running and know that He's God.

- **Suggest a reflective song here**

**Encourage your congregants to share the One Month To Live journey with others in a small group, continue reading daily the book and journaling their experiences. Ask them to share their experiences on the OneMonthToLive.com website so it will encourage others.**



## CREATIVE CAMPAIGN SERMONS FOR ONE MONTH TO LIVE

### SERMON 3: LOVE COMPLETELY (Principle Two)

- Suggested Videos: Sermon bumper video w/ Man on the Street (funny and serious selections; Video of woman who forgave her sons murderer; .Video of The Chasing; video of woman who quit job to stay at home with kids)
- Pastors will want to consider sharing this message together with their spouse on the platform.
- Suggest possible acts of kindness projects that would demonstrate love – e.g. blood drive; partner with a local food bank to stock their shelves; set up a clothes drive to give to families in need; identify a home in need of repair and spend a weekend doing fix-it projects.

### LOVE COMPLETELY – SUGGESTED MESSAGE OUTLINE & MANUSCRIPT

#### LOVE COMPLETELY Part 3 of Series: One Month To Live

*“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” 1 Cor. 1:18 (NIV)*

- The Mountain of Misunderstanding
- The Mountain of “Me First”
- The Mountain of Mistakes

#### 1. THE ROPE OF ACCEPTANCE

*“Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15:7 (NIV)*

**Acceptance: Stop trying to change me and start cherishing me**

*“The man and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.” Genesis 2:25 (NIV)*



## 2. GAIN TRACTION WITH LOVING ACTIONS

- Consideration

*"And look out for one another's interests, not just for your own."*  
Phil. 2:4 (GN)

- Cooperation

*"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of his love."*  
John 13:1 (NIV)

- Commitment

*"For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him."* Phil. 2:13 (NLT)

## 3. TETHERED BY FORGIVENESS

*"Get along with each other, and forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, forgive that person because the Lord forgave you."*

Col. 3:13 (NCV)

*"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."*

1 John 3:16 (NIV)



## MANUSCRIPT

### Intro.

I love to watch those incredible shows about Mount Everest climbers. I'm so intrigued by people who will risk everything to reach the highest place on earth. These guys will fight forty-degree-below-zero windchill factors, their hands and toes will be frostbitten, they'll barely be able to breathe, but they will give it all to make it to the top. I sit there watching, eating my Twinkie, just exhausted, feeling like I'm right there with them, risking my life.

Mount Everest is over 29,000 feet tall, but when you reach 26,250 feet, you enter what they call the death zone. There the altitude is so high it can't sustain human life. The body is unable to acclimate to such a low level of oxygen, so if you stay in the death zone too long, you die. That's what happened to a climber in May 2006. He was left by climbers in the death zone while they ascended to the top of Everest. All the people who passed him realized he was in trouble, but they assumed he was part of another team and someone else would rescue him.

Not long after that tragedy, another climber, Lincoln Hall, was found in the death zone. He was rescued by a party of four climbers and eleven Sherpas, who gave up their own summit attempt to stay with Hall and descend with him. Hall later fully recovered. What made the difference between the survival of one and the death of the other? Unselfish team work.

That kind of teamwork seems to be the exception these days. With sports superstars hogging the glory and corporate leaders taking all the credit, it's rare to see a unified, effective team. Too many individual agendas compete, sabotaging the goal that's best for the team. Whether it's a sports team, a friendship, a business partnership, or a marriage, a lot of relationships fall apart because it's so hard to get along with others. We each have a separate agenda that prevents us from communicating clearly and following through on what's needed to grow closer.

We're in a new series that I'm calling *One Month To Live – Thirty Days to a No-Regrets Life*, and we've been having a lot of fun with our thirty day challenge asking that clarifying question everyday, "what would I do if I knew I had only one month to live? If we were counting the days before we left this earth, we would be looking for ways to build bridges, to bring about healing, and to enjoy our most important relationships. No one wants to leave this earth with unfinished business. We want to leave our loved ones having experienced the summit of our relationships as the result of our courage to love.

To love completely we need the power of love. This principle is the area of greatest regrets because it deals with our relationships and is the most important of the four principles in this series. I want you to look at our first verse, it's 1 Corinthians 1:18. It says, "*For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the Power of God.*" Christ showed us the most powerful demonstration of love when He went to the cross, and in the cross we find the power to love the people in our lives, and we need God's power to love completely. We all know it can be a steep climb from where we are to where we actually want to be in our relationships. Whether it's a business partnership, a friendship, or a marriage, there are three mountains we've got climb in order to love the people in our lives.

Now, the first is **The Mountain of Misunderstanding**. Most relationships don't have the power to climb over the first summit of misunderstanding. Because in relationships, those misunderstandings can pile up quickly as high as Pike's Peak. In the beginning of a relationship, everything seems so positive. You're climbing a smooth trail together, close beside each other, and then – *Wham!* – you're faced with a big boulder of misunderstanding that seems to throw you both off course.

This situation can easily become the death zone for unity in a relationship. At first you think this person I'm relating to is great. They are just like me. But it doesn't take long to hit the mountain of misunderstanding and realize this person is not like you at all. In fact, they're completely different from you. And I do believe that



opposites attract. In fact, how many of you who are married would say to me, I married someone who is very much unlike me, someone who is very different than me? Raise your hand. Look at that. You see, opposites attract and then opposites attack, but I don't have to tell you guys that, do I? Or your source of conflict may lie in a business partnership where you seemed to share a corporate vision. After a conflict surfaced, however, you realized that you don't think alike at all. Rather than cling to the ideal – that this spouse, friend, business partner, or team was the right fit and you'd always understand each other – you must realize that differences of opinion are natural and inevitable parts of every relationship. We can't read other people's minds, no matter how much alike we may be. We're all human, so miscommunication and misinterpretations are inevitable.

Another mountain that we must climb in loving the people in our lives is what I call **The Mountain of "Me First"**. It's just human nature to say I'll meet your needs if you meet my needs first. Whenever my family rides in the same car altogether, and we don't do that very often, praise God, but whenever we do, there is this thing, this deal that my kids have where they always fight over who has to sit in the very back of our SUV and who gets to sit in the captains chairs of our SUV, and it's just a huge deal to them. And every time we get together in one car, they have this huge rumble, even my 15 and 16-year-old sons are in the middle of the rumble. Finally, my wife came up with a plan where you have to take turns. And so now we have to always remember who sat in the back, who had to sit in the back on our last trip and we fight over that. We can't remember. My philosophy was, just let them fight it out and see who wants it the most. Let them go at it. See who wants it. No, that's not my philosophy, but I think it would almost be better, but I guess that's just human nature to have this me first attitude. I don't want to sit in the last seat. I want the good seat. It's just human nature for me to want to meet my own needs before I meet other people's needs, but yet that creates a huge obstacle to overcome in relationships. It creates a huge me first mountain that's hard for many relationships to overcome.

The third and final peak in this rocky range is the most deadly – the **Mountain of Mistakes**. And we all make mistakes. Just as we have misunderstandings and the desire to put ourselves first, we all have faults, and we mess up. Many relationships are forever abandoned on the mountain of mistakes. Every one of us has been hurt when someone else wrongs us. And it's so easy when you're hurt in a relationship to build this mountain of bitterness around your heart to protect yourself from being hurt again. But when you build a mountain of bitterness, no relationship can overcome that. Why? Relationships can overcome anger. Anger will never kill a relationship. The Bible says sometimes it's healthy to get angry when you really care about a relationship. If you really love someone, sometimes you'll get angry. And the Bible says that's okay if you express it in the right way. But whenever you become bitter and you hold on to a hurt and you build a mountain of bitterness around your heart to protect your heart from being hurt, it only hurts you and it poisons your relationships and no relationship can overcome the mountain of bitterness that we can build.

These three mountains shape the landscape of every relationship. We can be intimidated by the ascent, viewing the challenge as insurmountable, and decide to give up. Or we can become the kind of person who knows what it takes to get over the obstacles and keep climbing. None of us truly wants to quit, and if we only had one month to live, this would be clearer than ever. To really love the people in our lives, we have to overcome these relational Alps and learn to work through the mistakes and push beyond our self-interests. We have to grow in our willingness and ability to pour ourselves into those we love, motivating them to stay on the trail with us and empowering them to persevere after we're no longer with them.

It's not easy – relationships aren't for wimps. And it's going to take some supernatural help: God's power to love completely. But the supply is limitless, and the price of His resources never goes up, because they're free. The Bible reveals strategies for keeping relational mountains small and manageable.

**1. The Rope of ACCEPTANCE.** In order to persevere and improve our relationships, we first must connect with the rope of acceptance. Rock climbers use a technique with ropes called *belaying*. It involves securing a climber to a rope so he doesn't fall too far if he slips off the rock. Similarly, we can't climb to new heights safely if we don't connect with a rope of acceptance. **"Accept one another, then, just as Christ**



**accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15:7 (NIV)** Now, to accept others, it means that I stop trying to change them and I try to understand them. If I have to try to understand the people in my life, I’m not going to love them. To really love them and climb over the mountain of misunderstanding, I need God’s power to understand them.

And men and women are very different and this causes a lot of problems in marriage. Somebody gave me this recently. It’s ten simple things that men really wish women understood about men. And I’ll read them from 10 to 1. Ten simple things, ladies, that we really wish you would understand about us. No. 10, ladies, if something we said can be interpreted two ways and one of those ways makes you sad or angry, we meant the other one. Simple things. No. 9, learn to work the toilet seat. You’re a big girl. If it’s up, put it down. Don’t complain. Don’t gripe about it. It’s just simple. We’re really simple folks. I mean, not hard to understand. No. 8, we’re not thinking about you. Live with it. These are ten simple things that somebody else wrote. I didn’t write these simple things that can become real complicated. No. 7, when we have to go somewhere, absolutely anything you wear is fine, really. Anything. And No. 6, come to us with a problem only if you want help solving it because that’s what we do. Sympathy is what your girlfriends are for. Ten simple things, ladies. If you just understand these things, you’ll get along with us a whole lot better. And No. 5, whenever possible, please say whatever you have to say during the commercials, if you can. And No. 4, Christopher Columbus didn’t need directions and neither do we. Right, guys? Yeah. No. 3, if it itches, it will be scratched. We do that. It’s no big deal. Don’t make a big deal of it. Just simple things. No. 2, we’re not mind readers and we never will be. Our lack of mind reading ability is not proof of how little we care about you. We do a lot of other things to prove how little we care, but it’s not that. And the No. 1 simple thing that we really wish women would understand about us is if we ask what is wrong and you say nothing, we will act like nothing is wrong. We know you’re lying, but it’s just not worth the hassle. Now, guys, it’s just simple, isn’t it?

Now I know I’m going to spend the rest of this message paying for that. So to start paying my dues, I’m going to invite my wife Chris to help me with the rest of the message. Okay, ladies, is that all right? Welcome my beautiful better half, Chris. And I hate to think what she’s going to say after that. You didn’t hear that last part, did you, honey?

CHRIS: Unfortunately for you, I did, honey. Ladies, are y’all ready for the other side of the story? Someone gave me a men’s thesaurus because men don’t always say what they mean. So we’re going to help you out a little bit, ladies, in knowing what mean really mean. When a man says, you wouldn’t understand, it’s just a guy thing. What he really means is there is no rational thought pattern associated with this. So our logical minds can never understand it.

PASTOR KERRY: Is that all you got? If that’s all you got, we’re okay, guys.

CHRIS: It’s not. It’s not all I’ve got. When a man says, hey, can I help with dinner, honey? What he really means is, so why isn’t dinner already on the table? And when a man says, uh-huh, or, sure, honey, or yes, dear, what he really means is absolutely nothing. That is just a conditioned response that he just says when there is nothing else going on in his head. But that’s not from personal experience that I know that. When a man says, take a break, honey, you are just working too hard; what he means is, hey, could you please stop the vacuum cleaner? I can’t hear the game. And when a man says, well, that’s interesting, dear. He means, are you still talking? But, you don’t mean that, Kerry. And when a man says, I can’t find it. What he means is, it didn’t fall into my outstretched hands, and therefore, I’m completely clueless.

PASTOR KERRY: Okay. That last one is a good point.

CHRIS: Well, Kerry, it’s true that to climb to new heights we need the rope of acceptance and let me give you my definition of acceptance. **Acceptance means stop trying to change me and start cherishing me.** You see, you really haven’t accepted someone if you’re still trying to change them. And Kerry and I have come to the place after almost 21 years of marriage where we love the differences that God has put into our lives, where



we've stopped trying to change each other and we really cherish each other. We realize it's our differences that make life so much more exciting and so much more interesting and marriage so much more fun. Kerry knows that to me acceptance means stop trying to change me and start to cherish me. And I really like that word cherish. I think every woman wants to be cherished and treasured by her husband. I think every kid wants to be cherished and treasured by their parents not to be made out to something that they could never attain to, not to feel like they always fall short of the ideal kid, but that they're just cherished for that special unique way that God has made and gifted them. And so, Kerry and I talk a lot about that value of cherishing each other and cherishing our family and marriage.

Now, guys, the good news is, is that in order to cherish your wife, you don't have to totally understand her in everything that she does and every way that she thinks. Kerry knows that all I ask him to do is to try to understand me, and when Kerry and I try to understand each other, even though God made us differently, we found that it's made a complete difference in our marriage.

PASTOR KERRY: That is good news, guys, that we don't have to understand our mate. We don't have to understand her. We may never be able to understand her completely, but we just have to try to understand her. Because Chris knows if I'm trying to understand her, then I'm connecting with her, that I'm in the game with her. I can understand that, can't you, guys? Being in the game together really trying to connect, trying to understand each other. That's what acceptance is. Look at this picture of acceptance in Genesis, Chapter 2:25. "*The man and his wife were both naked and they felt no shame.*" Does it say they were both naked and unashamed because they had been working out a whole lot and they're fit and buff and proud of their bodies? No, that's not what it means. No, it was because they felt that deepest human longing to be totally accepted. They were experiencing what every one of us want to experience in life, to be totally accepted. But to be totally accepted, we have to let our guard down. In wanting acceptance, usually what we do is try to hide our faults. Because we think I don't want them to know that I don't have it all together because if they discover I don't have it all together and I have faults, they may not like me. They may not accept me. And then a lot of times wanting to be totally accepted we cover up our feelings, our true feelings, we cover up our true personality, who we really are because we think if you really know me, what I really feel, then you may not accept me. You may not like me. And Adam and Eve didn't have to cover up anything. They didn't have to put fig leaves over their faults. They didn't have to put fig leaves over their true personality and true feelings. They were totally and completely accepted and that's the longing in every one of your hearts to be totally and completely accepted. But we're not in the Garden of Eden, are we? To be honest, it is not natural for me to totally accept the people in my life. What's natural for me is to try to change the people in my life to make them more like me. That's what's natural. It's supernatural to accept the people in my life just the way they are and work on my own faults and character flaws that I really need to work on and let God change them. That's supernatural. But God can give us the power to do that. But there is a second thing I need to do to overcome those obstacles to love the people in my life.

**2. GAIN TRACTION WITH LOVING ACTIONS.** If we're going to reach the summit in our relationships to love completely we not only need the rope of acceptance but the traction of loving actions. Nothing is more important to climbers than the traction of their boots. You can have all the other equipment, but if you aren't surefooted, you'll never ascend difficult terrain. The essentials for strong relationships are those small loving actions, all the seemingly insignificant things that means so much to someone else. It's all the little loving things that make a huge difference.

- **Possible video of woman who quit her job to stay home with her small children**

CHRIS: And there are three C's that give love traction, really make it stick, and the first is **consideration**. Philippians 2:4 says, "*And look out for one another's interests, not just for your own.*" That just means look to meet the needs of your spouse first before you meet your own. Look to meet the needs of your family before you look to meet your own needs. I need to look to meet Kerry's needs and he needs to look to meet mine, but the problem in most marriages is that there is a conditional kind of love. It's I'll love you if. I'll love you if you love me. I'll love you if you take care of me. I'll meet your needs if you meet mine, preferably first. It's all conditional.



But marriage works best when both the husband and the wife say I love you. Period. There is nothing you could do that would make me love you any more or any less, there is such freedom and acceptance in that kind of unconditional love, and that's what Kerry and I really work for in our marriage. And it is work. In our own strength we just want to meet our own needs and be selfish, but with the power of Christ in our lives, it can make an incredible difference.

Well, the second C is **Cooperation**. Great teams have what they call chemistry where the teams work together for common good and one player just knows what the other player is going to do and that's called chemistry in a team. When Jesus knew He had only one month to live watch how He loved completely in John 13:1 (NIV) *"It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for Him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved His own who were in the world, He now showed them the full extent of his love."* He showed them His love by serving them – He washed their feet – something a servant would do and He taught them to serve one another.

But many married couples, instead of serving one another and cooperating together, compete with one another. They're always competing. And the Bible says that when two people are joined together in marriage, they become one. And that means that in God's math, one plus one equals one. You're just one person. That means if you hurt your spouse, you hurt yourself. If you criticize or belittle your spouse, you're criticizing or belittling yourself; and for Kerry and I, that's made a real difference in our marriage. When we realize that we are one, we need to work together and cooperate in every way.

And then the third C is **Commitment**. Love is not love without the traction of commitment, of making that life-long commitment to each other. One of my favorite true stories about commitment is about legendary basketball coach John Wooden. Now, he is in his 90's now, but he has left a legacy of love and I'd like to share with you a letter written by one of his closest friends.

There has never been a finer person in American sports than John Wooden or a finer coach. He won ten NCAA basketball championships at UCLA, the last in 1975. Nobody has ever come even within six of them. He won 88 straight games, nobody has come within 42 since. There has never been another coach like Wooden. Loyal to one woman, one school, one way, walking around campus in sensible shoes and Jimmy Stewart morals. Discipline yourself and others won't need to, coach would say. Never lie, never cheat, never steal and earn the right to be proud and confident. If you played for him, you played by his rules. Never score without acknowledging your teammate. One word of profanity and you're done for the day. Treat your opponent with respect. He believed in hopelessly out of date stuff but never did anything but win championships. No long hair, no facial hair -- it would take too long to dry and you will catch cold leaving the gym, he would say. That one drove his players bonkers. One day, all American center Bill Walton showed up with a full beard. It's my right, he insisted. Wooden asked if he believed that strongly, and Walton said he did. That's good, Bill, I admire people who have strong beliefs and stick by them. I really do. We're going to miss you. Walton shaved it right then and there. Now Walton calls coach once a week to tell him how much he loves him. Wooden is almost 90 now, but on the 21st of the month, the best man I know will do what he always does on the 21st of the month. He'll sit down and he'll pen a love letter to his best girl. He'll say how much he misses her and loves her and can't wait to see her again. Then he'll fold it once, slide it into a little envelope and walk into his bedroom. He'll go to the stack of love letters sitting there on her pillow, untie the yellow ribbon, place the new one on top and tie the ribbon again. The stack will be 180 letters high then because the 21st will be 15 years to the day since Nelly, his beloved wife of 53 years, died. In her memory, he sleeps only on his half of the bed, only on his pillow, only on top of the sheets, never between, with just the old bedspread they shared to keep him warm. You see, that kind of commitment is the key to lasting love.

PASTOR KERRY: And it's all the little things that we do over time that really build up to make all the difference that builds great relationships.



But the truth of the matter is, it's not natural for me to meet others needs ahead of my own needs. It's natural for me to be selfish. It's supernatural for me to meet the needs of my family over my own needs. It's supernatural for me to meet the needs of others and serve others before I serve myself.

Look at Philippians 2:13. It says, *"For God is working in you, giving you the desire to obey him and the power to do what pleases him."* Now, underline the word desire and the word power. God wants to give you that supernatural desire to meet others' needs ahead of your own. Only God can do that. And then God wants to give you the power to meet other people's needs ahead of your own and only God can do that. You can't build a great marriage without God's power. You can't build a great business and love the people in your business without God's power. It takes God's power to do that. The clarity and security your loving actions bring to the people around you can't be underestimated and will provide the traction to take you to the summit. Then you move to the third thing. The third thing to overcome the obstacles of loving the people in your life is to be,

3. **TETHERED BY FORGIVENESS** Every climber also knows the importance of being tethered to the rock in order to keep from falling. It's a fail-safe attachment point for protection. In our relationships that tether is forgiveness. Look at Colossians 3:13. *"Get along with each other, and forgive each other. If someone does wrong to you, forgive that person because the Lord forgave you."* We get the power to forgive people in our lives who hurt us by looking at the cross. Because you'll never have to forgive anyone in your life more than Christ has already forgiven you. I'll never have to forgive anyone more than Christ has forgiven me and that helps me forgive others.

CHRIS: John Ortberg says, "The problem for many couples is they just have an incorrect concept of what marriage really is." You see, most people look at marriage like buying a new car. You know, when you buy a new car, it has that new car look. It looks great. It feels great. It smells great. You know, I love that new car smell, but eventually, the new wears off and that paint job doesn't have that shiny luster like it used to, and the engine might sputter a little bit. There is a few dings in the door, and it has definitely lost that new car smell. It has that old chicken nugget smell, and it's just not quite the same anymore. And in this concept of marriage, marriage is great to begin with, but it loses value over time. And after awhile, the marriage couple decides, boy, this isn't really like what it used to be. We need to change it. We need to get that new car smell back in our marriage. But I don't know if you've ever tried to go to the car wash and get that new car smell. I have. I ask for new car every time. After about an hour down the road, the old chicken nugget smell comes back and it just doesn't work. And then some people say, well, I'll just trade it in for a new model. I'll just trade it in for a new marriage. But this is an incorrect concept of what marriage really is. A healthier concept, a more Biblical concept is that marriage is like having a box of broken pieces and broken parts. Because marriage is when two imperfect people come together to share everything. Now, it doesn't seem like that at first because romantic love covers up a multitude of things. And for awhile, everything is coming up roses, but after awhile, the day comes when you wake up and say, wow, he's not like what I thought he was or she's not like what I thought. But marriage is having that box of broken pieces, broken parts -- we call it incompatibility -- what that really is are broken pieces that can come together, and our challenge in marriage is to take our box of broken pieces that we bring together to the marriage and to build something beautiful. To build something incredible together. Now, we need God's power to do it. We could never do it on our own. But with God's power, he wants to take your life and your spouse's life and build something more beautiful than you could ever be by yourselves. You know, when you buy a new car, you drive it off the lot and you've already lost a couple thousand dollars. It's already depreciated, but when you build something beautiful out of your marriage and you let God get involved in your marriage to create something, it will never lose its value. It only will increase with value over time.

PASTOR KERRY: I want you to watch the story of Terrilynn McDonough because it's a real story of God's power to love. A single mother who forgave her son's murderer. Just watch...

- **Possible VIDEO of single mother who forgave her son's murderer**



PASTOR KERRY: It's a great example of God's power to love. You know, to understand what love real is we've got to look to the cross. That's the picture of love. Look at 1 John 3:16. *"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers."* Christ showed us what the power of love was about when He went to the cross, and then He tells us that we're to love other people in our lives like that. We're to lay down our lives, our selfishness. Lay down our own wants and desires and meet the needs of others first. Serve others before we serve ourselves. It's what Jesus tells us to do and that's the power of love. But yet when I look around at the church, I see God's power to love evident each and every day in this church.

God is doing amazing things because you're a demonstration of laying down your life each and every day to serve others. That's what the church is all about. The church is not a place for perfect people. It's imperfect ordinary people who God uses in extraordinary ways because we love each other in a powerful way. We've got a great chance, too, to demonstrate love in this community.

- **Suggest possible acts of kindness projects that would demonstrate love – e.g. blood drive; partner with a local food bank to stock their shelves; set up a clothes drive to give to families in need; identify a home in need of repair and spend a weekend doing fix-it projects.**

And I know it will impact the city when people see what God's love is, how we serve them in little ways. It's all the little loving actions that give us traction as a church that have built this church to make it what it is. And we would love for you to join this church, but there are a lot of great churches around here, and if you haven't joined a church, you need to pick one and join. That's God's will for your life. I want to say this before you join Fellowship of The Woodlands, just know this is not a perfect church. If you're looking for the perfect church, don't join Fellowship of The Woodlands. This is a church of imperfect people who don't have it all together, but we're going the right direction. By the way, if you ever do find that perfect church, don't join it because then it wouldn't be perfect anymore if you join it. Did you ever think about that?

CHRIS: In one of my favorite Peanuts cartoons, Linus is sitting watching T.V. minding his own business and Lucy walks in and demands that he change the channel. And he says, why do you think you can just walk in here and take over? And Lucy says, these five fingers. Individually, they're nothing, but when I curl them together into a single unit, they form a weapon terrible to behold and Linus says, what channel do you want? And then as Linus turns around, he looks down at his own fingers and says, why can't you guys get organized like that?

That is how the church is. By ourselves, we feel like we can't get anything done. The world is big, we're small and insignificant, but the reality is that when we come together as a church, we can change the world.

I challenge you to look for ways to love completely. To do that you will need the power of the cross. It was there that God demonstrated His love for us by giving His one and only Son to die for our sins so we could be forgiven. When we receive His gift of love we can share it with others. Have you receive that love? If you only had one month to live you wouldn't put it off. You would want to experience His love completely.



## CREATIVE CAMPAIGN SERMONS FOR ONE MONTH TO LIVE

### SERMON 4: LEARN HUMBLY (Principle Three)

- Suggested Sermon Prop of a motorcycle on stage and a pair of motocross goggles to display
- Suggested Videos: Sermon bumper video w/ Man on the Street (funny and serious selections); Video of motocross track and funny jump; video of man & wife w/ triplets and leukemia)

### LEARN HUMBLY – SUGGESTED MESSAGE OUTLINE & MANUSCRIPT

#### LEARN HUMBLY

#### Part 4 of Series: One Month To Live

*“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.” 2 Cor. 12:9 (NLT)*

#### 1. LEARN FROM MY LOSSES

*“The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: ‘Before the rooster crows today, you will disown Me three times.’ And he went outside and wept bitterly.”*

Luke 22:61-62 (NIV)

- Take Responsibility for My Failure

*“A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance.”*

Prov. 28:13 (LB)

- Let Go of My Guilt

*“But go, tell his disciples and Peter, ‘He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see Him, just as He told you.’”*

Mark 16:7 (NIV)

#### 2. SURRENDER TO GOD’S STRENGTH

*“Then He said to them all: ‘If anyone would come after me, He must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.’”*

Luke 9:23 (NIV)

#### 3. PURSUE GOD’S PATH

*“I run in the path of Your commands, for You have set my heart free.”*

Ps. 119:32 (NIV)



- **The Call**
- **The Wall**
- **The Fall**

***“Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm.”*** Ps.

**20:7-8 (NIV)**

### **MANUSCRIPT:**

#### **Intro.**

We’ve come to the third principle in our One Month To Live Challenge and it is probably the most difficult of all for most of us. Principle 3 is to Learn Humbly. People who face the end of their lives have a remarkable humility. They have to depend on others. They are no longer self-sufficient or proud. Yet in their weakness they have discovered a liberating truth. It is found in 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NLT) It’s one of those difficult passages where Paul, the writer, is struggling with an issue in his life that he is absolutely powerless over. He asks God to remove it three times. But God says, *“My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.’ So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.”*

Do you ever feel powerless in life? Maybe you have a habit that you just feel powerless to break, or maybe it’s a problem in a relationship and you’ve tried everything to overcome it and it’s getting worse and you feel powerless to change it. Or maybe it’s a problem at work and it’s just draining your energy and your creativity, and you just feel powerless to solve it. Or maybe your schedule is overloaded and you feel completely overwhelmed and burned out. Your emotional batteries are drained and you feel powerless to control your schedule. We all feel powerless at times in life.

- **Suggested prop of a motorcycle on stage**

Now, this motorcycle here has a lot of power. 250 cc’s, that’s a big engine. It has a lot of power. Can you imagine if I just pushed this motorcycle around the Motocross track? I never kick-started the engine, never tapped into the engine’s power, but I just pushed this around the track over the hills and around the berms and the sharp curves and I just pushed it all around the track. That would be crazy, wouldn’t it? That’s the way a lot of people face life. We have all this power that is available to us. We have God’s horsepower to help us in our lives, to help us in our marriages, to help us in our finances, to help us in our families, to help us in our workplace. We have God’s horsepower available to us, but so much of the time we live life in our own strength. We try to climb the hills of life and face the problems of life powerless.

You know, I want to show you a demonstration of powerlessness. My wife, Chris, and I went out to the Motocross track for the first time ever and we tried Motocross, and it was definitely a demonstration of powerlessness. It was pathetic. Fortunately, you get to see it right now. Just watch.

- **Possible video clip of Kerry at motocross track jumping into a van**

In life, we have real power that’s available to us. We have God’s horsepower that’s available to us each and every day, but so much of the time we live life in and of our own strength. It’s like pushing a Motocross bike all around the track. When we have the engine on, all we have to do is kick-start it and tap into God’s power for our lives.



Life is a lot like a Motocross track. There are a lot of tough turns and sharp curves on the track of life. There are a lot of ruts and deep grooves you can get stuck in on the track of life. You know, there are a lot of bumps and hills and they're called whoops in Motocross. Just the normal pains and bumps and bruises and problems on the track of life, and then there are the extreme jumps where you're flying high with success on the track of life. And then there are crashes. Those failures on the track of life, and we all crash at times in life. We all experience failures. Sometimes people come up to me when they're starting a new endeavor or going for a dream in their life, starting a new plan, and they say, Kerry, what if I fail? And I say, what do you mean if? You're going to fail at times. It's just part of life. Everyone who has ever succeeded has also failed many times. I think it's appropriate we start the whole series today by talking about the power to begin again. How do you start over after a crash? How do you get out of the starting gate and get a fresh start in life after you have failed? You know, I've talked to some of these Motocross guys now, and I've learned a few things, and one of the things I learned is when you're going into a turn and you lean too far and you crash, you fall in, that's called a low side crash. But when you're going into a turn and then you flip out, it flicks you out, that's called a high side crash when you crash to the outside. It's a high side crash. And a high side crash is usually a much more violent crash because of the leverage and the G force. Well, we're going to talk today about a guy in the Bible who took a high side crash on the track of life. But yet God gave him the power to begin again. And he became a great champion for Christ, one of the greatest of all time, Simon Peter. Simon Peter teaches us by his own example how to learn humbly. He teaches us three important lessons to learn humbly. If you and I apply them to our lives, we can have the power to begin again. We can get a fresh start out of the starting gate of life. Well, the first lesson to learn humbly is I need to **Learn From My Losses**. I've got to learn from my losses. Every Motocross racer loses. But Motocross champions learn from their losses and put it behind them. Everybody fails in life. We've got to learn from those failures so that we can move on. Now, Simon Peter was one of the original members of Christ's racing team. In fact, Jesus changed his name from Simon to Peter which means the rock. And he said you're going to be the team captain. I'm going to build the whole team on you. You're the rock. You're a champion, Peter. Now, Peter became overconfident. He's kind of like us. He became proud, and on the night that Jesus gathered the team in the upper room, the night before the big race, Jesus warned him, this is going to be the most difficult race of your life. The track conditions will be the most difficult you've ever experienced. This is like nothing you've ever faced before. The jumps are higher. The turns are sharper. The condition of the track is not so good. And Jesus warned them, every one of you are going to crash. But Peter said, not me, Lord. Don't you remember? I'm the rock. I'm the champion. I'm not going to crash. You can count on me. I'll be with you at the finish line. I'll be right there with you. I don't care how high the jumps are. I don't care how sharp the curves are. I don't care what condition the track is in, you can count on me. I'm going to be right there with you at the finish line. But then what happens? Right out of the starting gate, Peter crashes. And it's a high side crash. I mean, it's a bad one. He denies Jesus three times. He loses his nerve. He becomes afraid. He doesn't want anyone to even know that he knows Jesus. But look what happens after this crash in Luke 22. *"The Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. Then Peter remembered the word the Lord had spoken to him: 'Before the rooster crows today, you will disown me three times.' And he went outside and wept bitterly."* Folks, that's the picture of deep regret. That's the picture of deep brokenness. Jesus didn't have to say a word to Peter. He just looked at him. He looked at him with compassion and he looked right into Peter's heart and he saw the regret, the guilt, the shame, and some of you are right there today. You're right in the middle of a crash, maybe it's a crash in your marriage, a crash in your family, a crash in your business or an emotional crash, but you're right there in the middle of a crash. And Jesus doesn't have to say a word to you. He just looks with compassion right into your heart. And he sees the guilt and the regret and the shame. But he does say something to you. He says to you today because of the power of the cross, failure is never final. Because of the power of the cross, failure is never fatal. We have the God of the second chance, and he wants to give you the power to begin again. That's what he did for Peter. He gave him the power to begin again. But to begin again I have to learn humbly from my losses, and to learn from my losses I have to take on something and I have to let go of something. I have to **take responsibility for my failures**. To learn humbly means I've got to take responsibility for my failures. I have to own them. Look at Proverbs 28:13. *"A man who refuses to admit his mistakes can never be successful. But if he confesses and forsakes them, he gets another chance."* When I admit my mess-ups, I get another chance. When I take responsibility for my failures and don't blame other people, God forgives and I get another chance. The Motocross champion never blames his bike. He never blames the condition of the track. He never blames the other riders. First



and foremost, he looks into the mirror and he learns from his losses. He takes responsibility for the loss, and he tries to learn first and foremost what he did wrong so it will never happen again. And if I'm going to learn from my losses, I have to look into the mirror and I have to take responsibility for my failures. You know, we live in a society that plays the blame game all the time. It's not my fault. I did this because they did that to me. It's their fault. We blame everybody. We blame our husband or our wife or family members. We blame our company. We blame the boss. We blame everybody. But we have to look into the mirror and take responsibility for our actions. I have to admit my sins so that I can be forgiven. I have to admit my failures so that I can learn from my failures. Peter was proud. He had been arguing with the other disciples over who was the greatest among them. But after his crash, it wiped out all his pride. In fact, he felt like God could never use him again, but just the opposite was true. God could finally use him. You see, God can't use me when I'm proud because then he doesn't get the credit for all the great things he would do in my life. God can use me and God can use you when we're broken, and some of you are at that place right now. Totally broken. You're right in the middle of the pain of a crash, and I want you to know it's a good place to be. It's a painful place, but that place of pain is the place of new beginnings. It's where God can use you. He has to wait until we get to that place of brokenness and all our pride is just wiped out because of the wipe-outs in our lives. And then God can use us. He can fill us with His strength and His power -- and He has taken out all my ego and all my selfishness and all my pride, and then He can really use me. It's a place of new beginnings, but I have to take responsibility for my failures. I have to take on something, and I have to let go of something. To learn humbly I also have to **let go of my guilt**. After a rider falls, after a rider crashes, it's important to get back on the bike as soon as possible to overcome their fears. And today some of you feel like you've fallen. Today some of you feel like you've gone so far off God's track you can never get back on track. You feel like you've blown it and you're totally out of God's will for your life and you feel like the race is over for you. I want you to know the race is not over for you. Maybe you feel like you've gone so far off track you can never get back on. No, God says I still have a race for you to run. Because we have the God of the second chance. After Christ rose from the dead, the angel was at the tomb, and look what the angel said in Mark 16:7. *"But go, tell his disciples and Peter, -- I love that verse -- 'He is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.'"* The angel said, he's alive. He's not here. You need to go tell the disciples He's alive; and, oh, don't forget Peter. Remember Peter is still included. He's still one of the disciples. Don't forget Peter. You see, Jesus knew that Peter was totally broken, and he felt like God could never use him again. He felt like he had completely blown it. His life was over. The race was over for him. Christ wanted him to know, Peter, I still have a race for you to run. I know how you're feeling, but just know you're still included. I still have a plan for your life. I'm going to give you the power to begin again, to become a great champion for me. Today God says to you I want to give you the power to begin again. I have a great plan for you, a great race for you to run. I want you to become a champion in life. But I have to let go of something. I have to let go of my guilt. And that's my responsibility. God forgives me through the power of the cross, but then I have to let go of my guilt because guilt blinds me to God's vision for my future. Guilt will blind you to God's vision and God's plan for your future. Some of you feel like you have no future because of the guilt from your past. You're just stuck in the past and you can't move beyond the past.

- **Possible motocross goggles for display**

You know, Motocross racers wear goggles. Now, the problem is, dirt and mud is flying up all the time from the track and it gets on your goggles and you can't see a thing. After awhile, you can't see through all the mud and all the dirt that's on the goggles, especially if you're like me and you're at the very back of the pack and all the dirt and mud is coming at you. That's the way it is with guilt. Guilt just fills up your screen. It muddies up the screen. It muddies up your vision for what God can do in your future. You get stuck in the past looking in the rear view mirror and you don't look out to see what God has for you. You think, you know, God doesn't have anything for me. My race is over because of my mistakes and my sins in my past. But Motocross racers know when their visors, their goggles get completely muddied over, they just have these little strips of plastic and they just tear them off and throw them away. And then a few minutes later, it gets muddy again and it gets dirty again, just tear it off. Throw it away. A little bit later, it gets muddy again and just tear another one off and throw it away.



That's what you and I have to do with our guilt. You see, our vision becomes muddled and clouded. Our vision becomes clouded because of our guilt and regret from our past mistakes. And we can't see the future that God has for us and the race that he wants us to run, but you and I have to choose to let go of our guilt, to tear it off and throw it away so that we can see the future that God has for us. You see, some of you are still feeling guilty over a sin that you've already confessed to God. He's forgiven you. It's just that you have never decided to tear away the guilt and let go of it, and today you need to let go of your guilt. Stop looking in the past. The past is over. Start looking at your future. You've got a bright future. Your future is as bright as the promises of God, but you've got to let go of your guilt and tear it off. Throw it away so you can see the future that God has for you. Peter began to learn to do that. He took responsibility. He owned his failure. He didn't blame anyone else, and then he started letting go of his guilt into God's unconditional love.

I came across this by Joshua Harris. It's called The Room. It just grabbed my heart. He said, I dreamed I found myself in the room. There was no distinguishing features except for one wall covered with small index card files. Without being told, I knew exactly where I was. This lifeless room with these small files was a crude catalog system for my whole life. Here was written the actions of my every moment, big and small, in a detail my memory couldn't match. The titles ranged from the mundane to the outright weird: Books I have read, lies I have told, comfort I have given, jokes I have laughed at, a lot of things I wasn't proud of, like things I have done in my anger, people I have judged, things I've muttered under my breath. And when I came to a file marked lustful thoughts, I felt a chill run through my body. I drew out a card and I shuddered at its detailed content. I felt sick that such a moment had been recorded. One thought dominated my mind: No one must ever see these cards. No one must ever see this room. I have to destroy them. I became desperate and pulled out a card to destroy it, only to find it as strong as steel when I tried to tear it. Defeated and utterly hopeless, I returned the file to its slot and then the tears came. I fell on my knees and I cried. I cried out of shame from the overwhelming shame of it all, but then as I pushed away the tears, I saw Him. There was Jesus reading each card. I couldn't bear to watch His response, and in the moments I could bring myself to look at His face, I saw a sorrow deeper than my own. Starting at the end of the room, He took out a file and one by one began to sign His name over mine on each card. The name of Jesus covered mine. It was written with His blood. I don't think I'll ever understand how He did it so quickly, but the next instant it seemed I heard Him close the last file and walk to my side. He placed His hand on my shoulder and He said, it is finished. I stood up and He led me out of the room. There was no lock on its door. There were still blank cards to be written on.

There are still blank cards to be written on in your life. Your future is as bright as the promises of God all because of the power of the cross. He did it all. He took away all of our sins and mistakes and failures, and when I own up to my sins and mistakes and failures, then He just signs his name across my name. He takes my place and He writes His name in blood and completely forgives me. He says I want you to look to your future. The past is past. It's time to look to the future and your future is as bright as my promises. So the first thing I have to do to learn humbly is to learn from my losses; and then the second thing I can do is **Surrender To God's Strength**. Once I learn from my losses. I have to surrender to God's strength. I have to rev up the engine of God's power. To learn humbly, I need God's power. I can't change in my own strength. Look what Jesus said in Luke 9:23. *"Then he said to them all: 'If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.'"* Today all the self-help books tell you if you want to find purpose in life, you need to look within and find your purpose, the reason why you're here. They tell you that you need to satisfy yourself, follow your own desires, meet your own needs. There is no way you'll find your purpose in life by looking within. You have to look to God who created you because He knows why He made you and what He made you for. Don't look within. You won't find anything there. You've got to look to God, the God who created you. He knows why He placed you on this earth. Only He knows your purpose in life and to satisfy yourself, that doesn't bring fulfillment, that's just a prescription for depression. Jesus said, I must deny myself to find fulfillment. I have to deny myself and follow God's plan and God's path and God's way and God's purpose for my life and that brings total fulfillment. It's just the opposite of what the world says. It's not satisfy myself, it's deny myself. Peter denied Christ and he crashed. But when he learned to deny himself, he became a champion. What does it mean in this verse to take up my cross daily? The cross can only mean one thing -- death. It means I need to die to my selfishness and my trying to live my life in my own strength and



surrender to His power and His strength every day. It's a daily beginning again. Every day in my life I come to this place where I realize I can't do it. Every day I come to this place where I say I want to be a great dad, but I just feel worn out right now. I just feel selfish. I want to be a great husband, but right now I just don't have the love that I need. Now I want to be a great pastor, but I don't have any energy right now. Every day of my life I come to this place where I fall on my face and say, God, I can't do it. I give up. And God says, finally. I've been waiting for that. Now I can get involved and give you My power and My strength. You see, every day is a new beginning. It's a daily process to learn from my losses and then to surrender to His power, to deny myself and die to myself and my selfishness and let Him give me the strength. I have to let God take the handle bars of my life each and every day and let Him steer my life where He wants to steer it. The best way I know how to illustrate this is He wants us to take up our cross and die to ourselves. He wants me every day to come to the cross, and I have to come to the cross with my plans, what I want to do, all my goals, and I have to come and nail them to the cross. Say God, my plans are your plans. I want what You want for me because I know You know what's best for me. I want Your plans. And then I have to bring my dreams, and I say, God, here are my dreams. You know I've got some big dreams, but I give You my dreams and I nail them to the cross and I want You to take my dreams and take my ego out of them, my selfishness out of them and give them back to me as Your dream, what You want for my life because I know You know what's best for me.

- **Possible video of man with leukemia.**

And then I have to take my time to go every day and say, God, I give you my time. It's Yours. I want to spend my time the way You want me to. I nail my time to the cross. And if I have any interruptions in my day, I know they're from You. Then I have to take my money, my finances and say, God, it's really Yours. Everything I have is Yours. You've given it to me. I nail it to the cross and I want to do what You want me to do with my finances. They're Yours. See, basically, folks, what it comes down to, is I have to take my whole life and take it right to the cross. And every day I've got to die to myself, my time, my plans, my dreams, my relationships, I've got to come to the cross each and every day of my life and die to myself so that I can live to Him and surrender to His power and it's a daily process where I fall flat on my face and I die to myself, and I feel His power in my life. You see, Peter had big plans, big dreams, but his dream had to die so that God could resurrect it and he had no ego anymore in it, no selfishness. It was God's dream which was best for him and God knows what's best for us. So if I learn from my losses, I surrender to God's strength. Then the third thing is I can **Pursue God's Path**. I can pursue God's path. It's all a trust issue. You see, I'll never surrender to God's strength and pursue His path unless I trust that He knows what's best for me. So many times I talk to people that say I don't know that I really want to sell out totally to God because what if He makes me do something I don't want to do. What if He does something in my life that I don't like? What if He messes up my life or if I give my life totally to Christ it will be so boring. He's going to just mess up my life. It comes down to a trust issue that I have to trust the God of the universe who made me, knows the best track for my life. He has built a track and designed it just for me because He designed me for that track. I have to trust Him that He knows what's best for me and He wants the best for you more than you even want the best for yourself. He loves you that much, but it's a trust issue. It comes down to that. I'll never surrender my life to Him unless I trust Him and I'll never trust Him until I get to know Him. The more I get to know Him and the more I spend time with Him, the more I realize He's trustworthy. You don't trust a stranger, do you? When you get to know God, the God who made you, you know that He knows what's best for you. A lot of people say you need to love God more. No, you need to know how much God loves you. If I know a little bit of how much God loves me, then I know I can trust Him with my whole life. And it's so much easier to let go and let God do what He wants when I know I can trust Him. Now, Peter began to depend on God's power and trust God's path for his life and God used him powerfully. Because of God's power, Peter proclaimed the gospel boldly on the day of Pentecost and over 3,000 people trusted Christ and were baptized, and he was on the road to becoming a great champion for Christ, following Christ's road no matter where it led because he knew that God ultimately had the best in mind for him. That God had the plan that he should follow. And when you pursue God's path, you can go full throttle in life. You see, God gives us His commands not to make us miserable, but so that we can enjoy life. Look at this next verse in Psalms 119:32. *"I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free."* When you follow God's path, you can go full throttle. God gives us His commands not to slow us down, but to set us free to go full throttle. You see the Christian life is the most exciting and exhilarating and frightening



and scary and fulfilling and rewarding life there is. It's full throttle. It is all out. It is high adrenaline. That's the plan God has for you. That's the track He's laid out for you. When you learn humbly you can go full throttle.

As I have looked in the scripture I've noticed that almost every person in the Bible who learned humbly went through three things. The first thing is **the call**. I have a call upon my life. You have a call upon your life. I have a call upon my life to greatness. You have a call upon your life to greatness. God has called me to be a great husband. God has called me to be a great dad. God has called me to be a great pastor. God has called you to greatness in whatever area He has called you to. You know it in your heart. You're called to greatness. I really don't think there are any great people in the world, there are only ordinary people committed to great causes, but God has called you to a great cause. And I have been called to greatness. The problem is, after the call comes **the wall**. I hit the wall. I hit the wall and every day I come to this place. God, I know You called me to be a great husband. Right now I don't feel like loving. God, I know You called me to be a great dad, but I feel like being selfish right now. God, I know You called me to be a great pastor, but I just don't have the energy right now. God, I know You've called me to greatness, but I can't do it. I feel powerless. I hit the wall. But then comes the third step, **the fall**. Kerry, that's real encouraging. I thought the wall was the bad part. Well, the good news about the fall is you have an option. You can either fall on your face or fall on your knees. You see, first comes the call to greatness, then we hit the wall and realize we can't be great without His power, and then we fall. You'll either fall on your face or fall on your knees. Sometimes I fall on my face and then I get up on my knees and I trust Him, and when I get on my knees He fills me about His strength and His power so I can do great things in life through Him and He gets the credit. Look what it says in Psalms 20:7. *"Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God. They are brought to their knees and fall, but we rise up and stand firm."* If you stand proud, you're going to fall on your face. But when you get on your knees and trust Him for His power, He'll raise you up for greatness and He has a great plan for your life. I want you to listen to the words of this song, and as you do, think about the problem you're facing. Think about the hill you're trying to climb or jump over and think about the power that's available to you. I want you right now to get on your knees in your heart. I know logistically in this place it's hard to get on your knees, so just in your heart get on your knees to Him and say, God, I need Your power. I can't do this without You. I need Your strength. I get on my knees. Just listen. When you do that you are leaning humbly.

Maybe like Peter you have heard that call, "follow me," Jesus said. But like Peter you have hit the wall with your pride and self-sufficiency. Peter fell on his face but then Christ in His restoring grace lifted Peter to his knees to find his real power in Him. What has God called you to do that only He can accomplish? I challenge you to get off your face and onto your knees, to learn humbly, get out of your guilt and receive His forgiveness so you can move forward. God has an amazing plan for your life and if you will learn from your losses, surrender to God's strength and pursue God's path you will experience the adventure of your life. What is it He's calling you to do? If you had only 30 days to live you would do it. Just do it!

Prayer



## CREATIVE CAMPAIGN SERMONS FOR ONE MONTH TO LIVE

### SERMON 5: LEAVE BOLDLY (Principle Four)

- Suggested Videos: Sermon bumper video w/ Man on the Street (funny and serious selections; possible video of woman who wants to be remembered for grace; possible movie clip from Schindler's List)
- Pastor may want to use a small sandcastle as a possible sermon prop

### LEAVE BOLDLY – SUGGESTED MESSAGE OUTLINE & MANUSCRIPT

#### LEAVE BOLDLY

#### Part 5 of Series: One Month To Live

*"If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward."*

1 Cor. 3:12-14 (NIV)

#### ETERNAL MATERIALS THAT BUILD A LEGACY

##### 1. CONVICTIONS

*"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever."*

Isa. 40:8 (NIV)

*"But if you just use My words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach."*

Matt. 7:26 (The Msg)

##### 2. CHARACTER

*"God knew what He was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love Him along the same lines as the life of His Son..."*

Rom. 8:29 (The Msg)

#### God's Character Building Tools

- Problems
- Pressures
- People



### **3. COMMUNITY**

***“Martha was distracted by her many tasks: So she came to Him and asked, ‘Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me.’ But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things: but there is need of only one thing and Mary has chosen the better part ...’”***  
**Luke 10:40-42 (NRSV)**

#### **MANUSCRIPT:**

##### **Intro.**

The final principle in the One Month To Live Challenge is where the rubber hits the road. Principle 4 is Leave Boldly. Everyone desires to leave a lasting imprint in life. Something that outlives them, a legacy to be remembered, that made a difference. Harold Kushner said, “I am convinced that it is not the fear of death, of our lives ending, that haunts our sleep so much as the fear ... that as far as the world is concerned, we might as well never have lived.”

- **Possible sermon prop of a small sandcastle**

When my kids were little I used to enjoy watching them build sand castles on the beach. I mean, they would work so hard for hours, and Chris and I would always have to be lathering them up with sunscreen on their back to keep them from getting burned and they would build tunnels and bridges and high walls. But it didn't matter how high they would build the walls and it didn't matter how hard they would work, because the next morning after the tide had rolled in, we would always walk out to the beach to find that all their hard work from the day before had been completely washed away.

I think most moms feel that way every day. Moms, you do the dishes, but after the next meal, the dishes are dirty again. You make up the beds in the morning, but by that night they're being slept in again. You cook a meal, but then within a few hours or a few minutes the kids are hungry again. You mop the sticky stuff up off the floor, but before you know it, the floor is sticky again. You pick the kids up from their lessons or their practice, but then the next day, you're taking them to their practice again. Most moms feel like they're building sand castles. Most moms feel like all their hard work gets washed away by the end of every day.

I want you to know the reality is, it may feel like every day at the end of the day everything you do down here on this earth gets washed away, but what's really happening is you're building a legacy for all eternity. Everything you do on this earth that gets washed away gets built up in eternity because you're building a lasting legacy.

God has placed a deep desire within all of our hearts to live a life that matters, to make a lasting mark on this earth. Every one of us have a desire to leave a legacy. So I want you to take out your outlines from your programs and, if you would like, open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians Chapter 3. Our key verse is verses 12-14 here. *“If any man builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, his work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man's work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward.”* This passage says that every day of my life I'm building a legacy, and every moment of every day I get to choose what materials I'll build with. I can build with temporary materials or I can build with eternal materials. And if I'm going to build a legacy, there are only three materials that I can build with. There are only three materials that will weather the waves of life, the first one is



**1. CONVICTIONS.** Convictions are those core values from God's Word that never change, convictions are eternal. Isaiah 40:8 says, *"The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the Word of our God stands forever."*

Trends and styles, they come and go but God's Word never changes. Pop psychology is always changing, but God's Word never changes. The best seller book list is always changing, but God's Word never changes. It's the truth. It's the truth for today. It was the truth 1,000 years ago, and it will be the truth 1,000 years from now. My convictions have to come from God's Word. My core values come from God's Word and they never change. They are rock solid in a shaky world, but I have to live them out for them to be convictions. Look at Matthew 7:26. I like the way The Message puts this. *"But if you just use My words in Bible studies and don't work them into your life, you are like a stupid carpenter who built his house on the sandy beach."*

He's saying don't just study the Bible; you've got to put it into your life for it to be a conviction. You don't really believe something unless you live it out. Now, I have up here a book that's very inspiring. Arnold Swarzenegger's Encyclopedia of Modern Body Building. Now, let's just say that you came up to me and you gave me this book and you said, Kerry, you know, I know you're exercising. You're trying to get in shape and all that, but I want you to take this book and the whole church has decided we want to give you six months off just to become like this because we think it would be really great to have a pastor that looked like that. And so I said, that's great. That's wonderful. So I take six months off, and I come back and you're so excited. The great day is finally arrived. You're anticipating your pastor looking like this, and I walk up on the stage and I look exactly the way I look today. How disappointing. And you say, well, Kerry, didn't you do this? Didn't you read the book? Oh, yeah, I read the book. It's my favorite book now. I love this book. I've read it six times. I read it once a month. It's amazing. In fact, I highlighted all the parts that moved me so deeply. Some parts about Arnold Swarzenegger's life really made me cry. It was amazing, and then I said I also memorized two chapters on his workout plan and I can say it word for word. In fact, I can even tell you what the Greek word for biceps is. I just studied this thing over and over. It's my favorite book now. But you might say to me, Kerry, you mean you didn't go to the gym? No, I didn't go to the gym; I was too busy studying this book. You didn't eat right? No, I didn't eat right. You didn't take steroids? No, I shouldn't have said that. No, I don't mean that. What do you mean; you didn't do anything that's in this book? No, I just read the book. I just studied the book. You know, I just -- I love it. It's just so amazing. And you'd think that's silly, wouldn't you? That's what a lot of believers do with this book. You know, they go to Bible studies over and over again, and they come here week after week and hear me preach, but yet they don't put it into their life. They don't live it out and it's not a conviction. I mean, you can know the Bible from cover to cover, but if you don't live it out, you don't really believe it.

My dad's always told me that a belief is something you hold on to, but a conviction is something that holds you. You see, a conviction is core values from God's Word that are our anchors, that hold us, that permeate our lives and become such a part of us it's just who we are. We live it out each and every day. That's what conviction is all about and convictions are eternal. If you're going to build a lasting legacy, you have to build convictions in your life. And parents, if you're going to build into your kids a lasting legacy, you've got to build into their lives deep convictions that they'll carry with them long after they're gone from your home. But then there is a second thing that's eternal, and that's

**2. CHARACTER.** God's cares about my character because when you die you don't take anything with you except for your character, who you are. You take that into heaven with you. Look at Romans 8:29. *"God knew what He was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love Him along the same lines as the life of His Son ...."*

You see, from the very beginning, God has always had a plan and his plan is to make me more like Jesus Christ, His Son. His plan is to put into your life the very character traits of Christ. He wants to build into your life the very character traits of His Son, Jesus Christ. The great sculptor Michelangelo was once asked, "How



did you sculpt the famous David?" And he said, "Well, I just chipped away everything that didn't look like David. It was as simple as that." And that's what Jesus Christ does in your life. He chips away everything in your character that doesn't look like Jesus Christ. He's chipping away everything in my character, all the character faults and character flaws that don't look like Jesus Christ because His plan is to make me more like Jesus Christ.

- **Possible Video of woman who wants to be remembered for grace**

His plan is to build my character and there are three tools that He uses to do that.

First is **Problems**. If you're a believer, problems always have a purpose. Sometimes God allows little problems into your life, those little irritations that kind of rub off the rough edges of your character. Other times, he allows huge problems into your life, that's when he gets out the jackhammer and starts chipping away those huge chunks that don't look like Jesus in your life and in your character, but problems always make me more like Jesus Christ if I have the right attitude in the problem.

And then secondly, **Pressures**. We learn patience under pressure. The most Christ-like people I've ever known were people who were under tremendous pressure. But pressure always brings out the best or the worst in us. Then God uses **People** as a tool to chisel away the rough edges in my character. Every one of us have people in our lives that are hard to love. Every one of us have people in our lives that irritate us, that get under our skin, that rub us the wrong way and some of you have those people in your family. Somebody said they are heavenly sandpaper. God uses them to just rub off the rough edges of our lives. Some of you are sitting next to them right now. Yeah, you know who you are. Don't look at them. I don't want you to have trouble here. Wait until you get home. Wait until you're out to dinner today.

But God uses these three tools because God wants to build our character so that we can build a lasting legacy. So we can make a mark on this earth and make a difference in this world. But then there is a third thing that's eternal and that lasts forever and that's

**3. COMMUNITY.** God's Word lasts forever. Godly convictions and Godly character last forever and God's people last forever. That's why it's so important to be in relationships with other believers in a small group to grow together, people who are going the right direction, who don't have it all together but they're going the right direction. If you're too busy for a small group, then you're just too busy. You remember the sisters in the Bible, Mary and Martha, the friends of Jesus. One night they invited Jesus over for dinner, and Martha was running around in a frenzy trying to make sure everything was perfect because the Son of God was in her house, but Mary just sat at Jesus' feet conversing with God's Son. And Martha was pretty ticked about the whole thing. She was mad at Mary and I think she was really mad at Jesus because Jesus wasn't setting it straight here. He wasn't looking out to meet her needs there, and so she comes to Jesus and look what she says in Luke 10. *"Martha was distracted by her many tasks: So she came to Him and asked, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things: but there is need of only one thing and Mary has chosen the better part ....'"*

Oooh, you know, Jesus just has this way of tender heartedly just driving the knife in and twisting right there. That had to hurt. You know, but Martha is thinking, look at all I'm doing. I'm working as hard as I can and look what she's doing, and Lord, look what you're letting her do. You know, you're God's Son, why don't you tell her what she needs to do? And Jesus kindly and sweetly tells Martha, you're missing the boat. You know, your priorities are all wrong. Martha -- Mary is doing the thing that's important that will last the only thing that's eternal. You're making the Christian life too complicated. It's really pretty simple. It's a relationship with me and a relationship with others. That's what Jesus was saying.

Sometimes we make it too complicated. We get so busy building into the lives of everyone else that we



forget about yourself. And God says to you today, don't feel guilty about thinking about yourself. Don't feel guilty about meeting your needs. Don't feel guilty about spending time with me and getting refreshed spiritually and don't feel guilty about spending time with others in fellowship and growing together in the Lord. You need that so you can be the person that God wants you to be. Too many times you're always building in the life of everyone else and no one is giving back to you to refresh you. That's why it's so important for you to be in a small group. You need that. You need to spend time with God and spend time with others just fellowshiping. It's so important to refresh your spiritual needs so you can meet the needs of others.

We were talking to these sand sculpting experts this week, and they said the number one question they get asked all the time is that people ask them, "Don't you get discouraged that you're building something and you are working so hard on something that's just going to be torn down? Don't you ever feel discouraged that all you're building and doing is just going to be all torn down soon?" And they said, "No, not at all. We love the process. They said it's not the finished product that's so satisfying, it's the process. It's doing all the creative work and feeling so satisfied and using our gifts. And it's the relationships and the fellowship -- we have so much fun together on our team." They said that's what gives us the most joy. So we could care less that it's going to get knocked down. That's not the point. I thought about that and I thought that's the way life is. The castle you live in, that house you live in, it's a sand castle. It's going to get knocked down one day. Don't get too attached to it. Enjoy it, it's great and fine, but it's what goes on inside that castle that's important. It's not your house that's important, it's your home that's important. It's your family. You see, it's just a sand castle. It's going to get knocked down one day. So don't get too attached to it. That car you drive is a sand castle. Don't get too attached to it. It's going to get knocked down one day. It's going to wear out, probably already is starting to wear out. Don't get too attached to these things. Everything you own on this earth, God says enjoy them. They're fine and good but don't get attached to them. That's not where life is. Those are just sand castles. It's the relationships that matter. Your relationship with me, God's only Son, and your relationships with others. That's what matters and that's what's going to last when it's all said and done.

Just think about it. Everything you own is a sand castle. It's all coming down. There are only three things that are going to last, our convictions, our character, and our community with others, our relationships. God's Word, Godly character and God's people, those are only three things that are going to last.

Everything we have on this earth will be washed away. The moment you die, you don't take anything with you except your convictions, your character and yourself. You last forever. You know, people live forever, either in heaven or in hell. And we have to choose whether or not we want that relationship with God's Son and we have to choose on this earth whether or not we want to make a difference in this life, whether we want to relate to others and build relationships, the most important thing. Whether we want to reach out to others on the other side of the world to make a difference in their lives. We have to make that choice, but just think about it, every one of us, everything we own, everything is going to be washed away and it's going to be completely gone and only three things will really last. What kind of legacy will you leave behind?

Sometimes we feel like we can't make a difference. What can we do? How can we leave a lasting legacy? After all we're not wealthy or powerful? I'm reminded of a story of a businessman visiting a resort community who left his hotel early one morning to take a walk on the beach. Outside he came upon a stunning sight -- countless starfish had washed up on the beach during the night in a high tide. They were still moving, still alive, clambering all over each other trying to get back in the ocean. He knew it wouldn't be long until the tropical sun would get hot enough to bake the poor creatures trapped there on the beach. He wished he could do something, but there were thousands of them, as far as his eye could see, and there was no way he could make a dent in saving so many of them. So he went on his way. Walking farther down the beach, he came upon a little boy leaning over, scooping up a starfish, and flinging it like a Frisbee out into the ocean. He repeated the process over and over again, trying to pick up speed, obviously trying to save as many starfish as possible. Once the man realized what this little boy was doing, he felt it was his responsibility to help the boy



by informing him of a harsh life lesson. So he went up to the boy and said, "Son, let me tell you. What you're doing here is noble, but you can't save all these starfish. There are thousands of them. The sun's getting really hot. They're all going to die. You might as well just go on your way and play. You really can't make a difference here." The little boy didn't say anything at first; he just stared at the businessman. Then he picked up another starfish, flung it out into the ocean as far as he could, and said, "Well, I just made *all* the difference for that one." Often children have more to teach us than we have to teach them—certainly in this case. This boy did not allow the overwhelming magnitude of the situation to keep him from doing what he could do: saving one starfish at a time. Perhaps Helen Keller summed it up best: "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."

If we knew our time on earth was running out, we'd want to do all we could to impact others. We wouldn't want the regret of a life misspent and self-absorbed. We would want to know that we honored the God we love by being the very best stewards of all He has given us. If we truly want to grow in our character and our faith, then we must be willing to change our goal from one of safety to one of sacrifice.

One of the first and most important ways we can begin to care more about others is to pray for the poor and oppressed throughout the world. Pray for their needs. For their healing. For religious and political freedom. For food and clean water and vital medicine. When we start praying for the hurting people on the other side of the world, we begin caring about them, and we want to learn more about the details of their lives. It connects our hearts to theirs. We're more mindful of what we have, how we can use it, and why we've been entrusted with it.

- **Possible movie clip from Schindler's List at the end when he thinks of how he could have saved more Jews**

God has given each of you time, talent and treasure. I challenge you to use it to leave a lasting legacy. If you do you will leave boldly.

Prayer



## CREATIVE CAMPAIGN SERMONS FOR ONE MONTH TO LIVE

### SERMON 6: LIVING A NO-REGRETS LIFE (Wrap up celebration)

- Suggested Videos: Sermon bumper video w/ Man on the Street (funny and serious selections; video clip of the Passion movie; father who took happy meal to son at school and single mother who forgave her ex-husband.)
- Suggested Sermon Prop of a puzzle to put together and members leave w/ a piece of the puzzle to remember the message.
- Pastors will want to challenge their congregants to do the following throughout this campaign:
  1. Move from the Challenge to a One Month To Live Lifestyle
  2. Encourage them to log on daily to [www.OneMonthToLive.com](http://www.OneMonthToLive.com) for daily accountability and support

### A NO-REGRETS LIFE – SUGGESTED MESSAGE OUTLINE & MANUSCRIPT

#### LIVING A NO-REGRETS LIFE Part 6 of Series: One Month To Live

*“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”* John 10:10 (NLT)

#### FOUR PIECES TO A NO-REGRETS LIFE (A Passion Filled L.I.F.E.)

##### Love

*“...You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first.”* Rev. 2:4,5 (NIV)

##### Integrity

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.”* Mark 12:30 (NIV)



## **Forgiveness**

***“Surely resentment destroys the fool, and jealousy kills the simple.”***  
Job 5:2 (NLT)

## **Enthusiasm**

***“en theos” – God within***

***“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, ...”***  
Col. 3:23 (NIV)

## **MANUSCRIPT:**

### **Intro.**

We're concluding our series One Month To Live and thank God you're alive! The whole point of this series was not so much to prepare you to die as it was to prepare you to live! God willing, you will live for many, many more months, years, or decades, enjoying life to the fullest, forever changed as you embrace who He has made you to be and your passionate pursuit of its fulfillment. We've discovered four universal principles that are unique in expression that will enable us to live the life God created us to live, to live passionately, to love completely, to learn humbly and to leave boldly.

Someone said, "Your life is a gift from God. What you do with it is your gift to God." If you've taken the one month to live challenge you made some significant changes and your life is different. Now what? If I were limited to one thing to take from this series it would be to ignite and restore passion to your life. If you only had one month to live, you would want to enjoy every single moment as the precious gift it is. And you would want to make every second count toward something meaningful and eternal, something that fulfills your purpose on this earth. The fuel for sustaining the one-month-to-live lifestyle over the long haul is passion.

Look at John 10:10. It says *“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give life in all its fullness.”* Circle that word life. Jesus said my purpose is to give you life, to give you a zest for living, to give you an enthusiasm for your life, to fill you with passion. I want you to be a passionate person. Doctors today are always trying to come up with new medicines so that we can add years to our lives, so we can live longer. Jesus said I have come, not to add years to your life, but to add life to your years. I want you to live a passionate life so you will have no regrets. This verse not only tells me that Jesus has a purpose for my life, but it also says that Satan has a purpose for my life. God has a plan for your life, but Satan has a plan for your life. Circle the word steal, kill and destroy because that's his plan for us. He wants to steal away your passion for life. He wants to kill your dreams and he wants to destroy your love in your relationships. He is always working towards that. That's his plan. That's his purpose. That's what he's about. God's got this wonderful plan for our lives to fill our lives with passion so we can live life the way it was meant to be lived, but Satan is always trying to steal our passion. Circle the word thief in that verse. He's a thief. He's the passion thief. He's always trying to steal a little bit of the passion from our lives. He uses the stresses and the problems and the pressures of life to drain us of our passion. Maybe today you are saying, "Kerry, I've sort of lost my zest in life. Nothing really turns my crank right now. Nothing really motivates me. The problems and the stresses have



taken their toil on me. I don't have a whole lot of passion right now." So, how do you restore your passion for life? This is a message that we all need. Passion is sort of like a puzzle. There are pieces to the puzzle and you've got to put it back together. I thought we would do something fun this morning to help illustrate this, so I have Pastor Stan back stage right now. I've given him an assignment to put together a puzzle before the end of the message. Let's go back there and see what's up. Hey Stan.

Stan: Hey, everybody. How are you doing? I've got this puzzle here Pastor Kerry. It's 10 Deluxe Jigsaw puzzles and because I'm so brilliant, that's why you hired me, I'm going to pick the hardest one of all right down here called mixed sweets. It has 1,000 pieces.

Kerry: Wow man, that's pretty cool. Can you get it together by the end of the message?

Stan: I guarantee it. By the way it says ages 12 and up, so no problem. A piece of cake, a piece of puzzle actually. Look at these pieces right here.

Kerry: Why don't we take a survey of the congregation and see how many believe that you can actually get this thing done?

Stan: Everybody that thinks I can do it please be seated. Thank you.

Kerry: We're with you 100%. We'll check back with him in just a little bit. My assignment for him is I hope he can finish that whole thing by the end of the message.

Now, fortunately the passion puzzle doesn't involve 1,000 pieces. The Bible says there are only four pieces to the passion puzzle. First, we have to look at God's Word to find out what those four pieces are. Then I want us to inspect our own lives today to see what pieces are missing in our lives. I put this in an acrostic of the word life because Jesus came to give us life to the full. That's passion. If you want to live a no-regrets life the first piece of the passion puzzle is the most important piece. **L** stands for **Love**. Love is the foundational piece to the passion puzzle. The fuel that fires the passion in a marriage relationship is love. The fuel that fires the productivity at the workplace is love. In fact, they did a study that went on for 20 years, a cross section of American workers, they studied thousands of workers over a 20 year span of time and here was the conclusion of the study. If you do what you love to do long enough, success will come. If you do what you love to do long enough, success will come because people don't succeed at what they don't love. It comes out of love. For a marriage it comes out of love. The passion of marriage comes out of the root of love. For passion at the workplace, it comes out of love. I love what I do. I love being your pastor. I love this church. Sometimes people ask me, Kerry, do you ever get tired of the ministry? I always say, no, no way. I get tired in the ministry, but I never get tired of the ministry.

By the way, there is a big difference between passion and lust. The difference between passion and lust is when you have a passion for something the more you do it the more satisfied you are. With lust, the more you do it the less satisfied you are. Lust leaves you empty. Passion comes out of love. An unselfish love. Lust comes out of selfishness. A lot of people today confuse passion and lust. They confuse lust and love. In fact most of the love songs today, they are not love songs at all. They are lust songs. That's what they are. It's not about giving unselfishly, it's all about taking. That's lust. Why is it that so many marriages start out sizzling, start out hot, and before you know it they are fizzling. The romance just goes out. The passion just dies out. Why does that happen so many times in marriages? It reminds me of the couple who went to the doctor because the husband had been having some health problems and the doctor came back with the test results. He said, "I'm so sorry to tell you this, but sir it looks like you only have about six months left to live. I would like to talk to your wife alone." So, the guy goes back out to the car and waits for his wife. The doctor says to the



wife, "Madam, I really think your husband could live a lot longer if you do two things. Feed him three healthy meals a day and make love to him every night." The wife goes back out to the car and the husband is just waiting anxiously and he says, "What did the doctor say?" The wife looks at her husband right in the eye and says, "He says you are going to die." Why is it that the passion goes out of our marriages so quickly? What's the deal? It starts out passionate, but then before you know it, the passion is gone. I'll tell you why. We've got to get back to the root of passion and that is love. The foundational piece in the passion puzzle, the fuel that fires the passion is a marriage relationship is love. The fuel that fires passion in our lives is love. The Bible tells us this in Rev. 2:4,5. "... You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first." The real problem is most people don't know what love is. We'll talk about it more next week, but most people think that love is just a feeling that you feel. People talk about just falling in love, like it's a ditch or something. You can fall in, you can fall out and you can't help that you're just walking along and BOOM. Love is not a feeling. Love is a choice, love is an action.

- **Possible video story of father who took happy meal to son at school**

Love is a choice, love is an action that produces powerful feelings, but it is not a feeling. So many people today think love is a feeling and when the feelings are gone they think I fell out of love. That's not it at all. Love is an action the Bible says. Love is a choice. When you do those actions and when you make that choice, it produces powerful, passionate feelings. It says in this verse that you have to get back your first love. It says do the things that you did at first. If you want to fall back in love again, if you want to get the passion back in a marriage relationship, you have to do those things that you did when you first fell in love. You have to get back to the root of love. Rather than worrying about the feelings most people say "I just don't feel in love anymore." They are just waiting for these feelings to come back upon them. Those feelings will never return until you start acting in a loving way. When you start acting in a loving way, passion comes back in your marriage relationship. What did you do when you first fell in love? You've got to do those things again. Spent time together, were affectionate, focused attention, romantic, all those things that you did. Most people are waiting for the feelings to come back then they'll do those things. No, you have to act in a loving way and it produces powerful feelings because love is the foundational piece to the passion puzzle. This verse is really talking about rekindling your love for God. If you want to rekindle your love for God and if some of you today say Kerry I'm a believer, but I have to admit that I don't feel really close to God right now. Maybe you can look back at a time in your life where you felt a lot closer to God, where you felt a lot more passionate, where you felt God was right there with you, you felt so close to God. Well, who's moved? God hasn't moved. He's right there with you. It's you who moved. If you are feeling right now that you are not as passionate about God as you once were, you don't have that spiritual fervor that you once had, then you have to do the things you did when you first fell in love with God. What did you do? You spent time with Him, you were so excited about the Bible and learning all these things, about what it means to love God, you are really getting into it. You were telling everybody what was going on in your life, telling all your friends how your life is changing and what God is doing in your life. You have to get back to doing those things if you want to fall in love with God all over again. It says repent, which just means change your mind and do the things that you did at first. If you want to rekindle your passion for life, you focus in on God's love for you and loving God. The foundational piece to the passion puzzle is love.

But, there is a second piece to the passion puzzle if I want to live a no-regrets life. That is **I for Integrity**. Integrity. Integrity is simply integrating what I say I believe into my daily actions. Integrity is integrating what I say I believe into my daily walk. The opposite of integrity is compartmentalizing your life. It's not integrating your life, but compartmentalizing your life. Think of your life like a pie. There are all these different slices in the pie. You have a career slice. If you are married you have a marriage slice. If you have a family you have a family slice. Maybe a hobby slices, a recreation slice, maybe a God slice. But God says I don't want to be just



one little slice in your pie of life. God says I demand first place in your life or no place at all. I don't want to be just one little slice in the pie of your life. Look at this verse again in Mark 12:30 from the NIV this time. *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."* Circle all the all's in that verse. God says I want to be integrated into every area of your life. Think of your life like a pie, it's sliced up into all these different slices. You have the big circle, the pie of your life, but God wants to be at the center of all the slices of your life. There is one big circle out here that is your life, all the slices of your life, your career, marriage family, hobbies, recreation, but right in the center is where God belongs, where He is first place in every slice of your pie. He's the one who died for us. He deserves first place in our life. Every area. If you want to have integrity you have to integrate God into first place of every area of your life. Just as lust destroys the passion in our lives, so does the lack of integrity. Nothing frustrates us more then when we say that we believe something, but we don't live it out in our lives. Nothing frustrates us more then to say God is first place, but yet we don't give Him the time, the talents or the treasure that He demands. That just frustrates us when we say one thing but do the other. It frustrates me when I say my health is important, but I don't eat right or I don't exercise the way I should. That frustrates me. I lose my passion for life. When I say my family is first, but yet I overwork and I neglect my family. Nothing frustrates me more then when I say I believe something, but I don't live it out. It just drains the passion from my life. That is a passion stealer, a lack of integrity. Compartmentalizing your life and not letting God be integrated into first place in every area of our lives. Let's move on to the third piece of the passion puzzle. It's a real important piece. **F** stands for **Forgiveness**. Have you ever been having a good day? Things are going pretty good. Feeling pretty good. You have a bounce in your step and then you have a conflict with someone. Let's say you get into conflict with someone at work. Or, let's say you have an argument with your spouse. Nothing drains your passion quicker then unresolved conflict. Look what it says in Job 5:2. *"Surely resentment destroys the fool, and jealousy kills the simple."* Circle the words resentment and jealousy. Those two things will steal passion quicker then anything else. Resentment is the great passion stealer. Resentment is the great passion killer. That's why God says we are to learn to forgive others. Not to let them off the hook, but for our own sake. If you want to get your passion for life back, you've got to learn to forgive people. It doesn't say that you let them off the hook and say it was no big deal, you didn't really hurt me, it's okay. No, it was a big deal, but you forgive them for your sake because God commands it.

- **Possible video of single mother who forgave ex-husband**

We have to learn to forgive. So many times we carry around resentment, bitterness, we've been hurt and we carry it around and hold onto that hate and it just steals our passion for life. The person that hurt us could care less. It doesn't hurt them a bit. We're not getting back at them a bit. It's just hurting us and it just drains you of your passion for life. When you have a conflict with someone and something's not right and you don't resolve it, you don't work toward resolving it, it's just out there, it steals your passion. Jesus is the great example for us as He always is. On the cross, what did He say? Father, forgive them for they don't realize what they are doing. He forgave those who were crucifying Him. No one forgave more then Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the most passionate person who ever lived because He was the most forgiving person who ever lived. The crucifixion of Christ is really called the Passion for Christ. We call it the passion of Christ. Have you ever seen The Passion Play of the crucifixion of Christ? Mel Gibson came out with the movie called The Passion of The Christ which I believe is the most realistic portrayal of Christ's death. He was passionate about you and me. He was so passionate about us and He cared so much about us that He went through all that just for us because love is not a feeling, love is an action. He gave us the most loving action of all time. He died on the cross for us. When you think about what Christ did for us, you think about how passionate we ought to be about Him. It amazes me in America today that it's okay to be passionate about everything else except for God. Isn't that true? In America it's okay to be passionate about sports. I love sports. It's okay to be passionate about sports. You can scream, you can yell, you can get riled up, you can paint your face and do all kinds of crazy things. That's okay. People do weird things when it comes to sports, but it's okay. You do weird



things and you get all excited and you scream and you yell for your team and you are called a fan. You get excited about God and you are called a fanatic. It's okay to be excited about everything in America except God. It's time for we, as believers, to get excited about Him and passionate about Him. I'm not saying weird or strange. I'm just saying passionate. He's placed within us a passion and we are to live that out in our lives. Let's look at the fourth piece to the passion puzzle. **E** of life is **Enthusiasm**. To live a no-regrets life I need enthusiasm. Emerson said nothing great ever happens without enthusiasm in life. Now enthusiasm comes from two Greek words, *en* and *theos*. *Theos* is the Greek word for God. *En* simply means in. It literally means God within. That word enthusiasm comes from the words God within. So, if you are a believer you have God within you. The most enthusiastic, the most passionate one who has ever lived, Jesus Christ, lives in you through His Spirit. If you are not passionate about anything. You'd say, "Kerry, I don't know that I'm passionate about anything. I just don't have any passion. Nothing really gets me excited. Nothing really turns my crank. Nothing really gets me motivated to get up in the morning. Then you have to ask yourself is God within? Have I really opened up my life to Christ and allow Him to be first place and come into my life because if you have, then you have the most passionate One of all time living in you. *En Theos*. God within. God is within you and that's where we get the word enthusiasm from. We should be the most enthusiastic people of all – believers. Or maybe you are a believer and yet you've lost your enthusiasm. I would say this – you are not spending enough time with God because the more time you spend with God who is extremely passionate, the most passionate you become. You become like the people you hang out with. If you start hanging out with God a little bit, you become passionate. You start caring about the things God cares about. You start hurting for the people God hurts about. You start getting excited about things God gets excited about. You become a passionate person when you start spending time with God. Col. 3:23 says *"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord,..."* He is saying whatever you are doing, be passionate about it. If you can't be passionate about it, don't do it. You may say Kerry my job is really mundane. That's okay. You can be passionate about it as long as you remember that God is your boss. As long as you remember who you are working for is God, it doesn't matter what you are doing, how mundane it is, how insignificant it may seem. God is watching. The Creator of the Universe is watching what you do. Tomorrow when you go to work or tomorrow when you are there with your family, tomorrow when you are doing those little things that maybe no one else notices, God notices and He is there and He says you will be rewarded one day if you do it for Him with all your heart. Whatever you do, do it with all your heart.

You've moved from the one month to live challenge to a one month to live lifestyle. You never have to go back. You'll never be the same! To maintain a life of no-regrets and remember these principles in your life I want to challenge you to continue logging on to [OneMonthToLive.com](http://OneMonthToLive.com). Connect daily to God's Word through the One Year Bible and the Spiritual Growth section. Use the relational tips to grow in your relationships. Take some time to take care of your body in the physical fitness section and gain the benefit of the financial counsel on this site so you can continue experiencing the life you were made for. I challenge you now to get together with a friend over coffee or lunch and share your experience from the past month. Ask what they would do if they knew they only had one month to live.

One of my favorite movies is the Academy Award winning movie, *Gladiator*. I don't condone the violence in the movie, but the story is awesome. I love that movie. In fact, most men I know love *Gladiator*. A lot of women love it because Russell Crowe is in it I think, but most men love it. The reason why this movie really grabs men's hearts is because of the character played by Russell Crowe – Maximus. If you know the story you know Maximus was a great general of Rome. A man of great integrity and he loved with all his heart. He loved his family with all his heart. He loved his men who served him with all his heart and they respected him and loved him and would give their lives for him because he was a man of integrity and a man of love. He was a man of passion. If you know the story you know the evil emperor had his family killed and he becomes a slave and then he becomes the gladiator. Then Maximus, the gladiator, defies the whole Roman Empire. How? He does it with integrity. All the other gladiators want to please the Emperor so that they can



be released. They look to see what the Emperor says. Does he live or does he die? They want to please the Emperor, but Maximus could care less about pleasing the Emperor. He had integrity. He could care less about pleasing the powerful people. He had integrity. While everyone else was trying to please the crowd, Maximus could care less about the crowd. He didn't care what the crowd thought about him. He was a man of integrity and that made the crowd love him even more. When you see someone with integrity, someone with passion, someone with love, someone with no fear, you admire them. It catches you by surprise. The crowd was stunned by him and the crowd just loved him all the more and they would yell, Maximus, Maximus, Maximus and Maximus was courageous, he had no fear of death because he loved something a lot more than his own life. He loved the family that he lost and he loved Rome and wanted to return to his glory days. Maximus wasn't afraid to die, he was courageous, had no fear. He was a mighty, fighting gladiator with no fear because he loved something a lot more than himself. I think the reason why most men, if I could just speak to men right now, the reason why most of us guys love that movie is because we really want to be Maximus. God has placed within our heart a desire to be Maximus. To be a gladiator that fights for our family and cares about them over our own needs. That loves so much that we are not afraid of anything. That we have integrity and we're honest. We can be trusted. The people that we work with or work for us or that we work for, respect us for our integrity. I think every man deep in our heart, we want to be Maximus. A gladiator that fights for things that are important. A gladiator that fights for our family and puts our family over ourselves and is not afraid of anything. Not afraid of anything. That's what I want to be like. I have to say that many times I'm not like Maximus at all. I'm selfish, a little petty, I put my own needs ahead of my families at times. Many times I'm just not like Maximus at all, but inside of me that is what I want to be. God has placed that desire in my heart and men, God has placed that desire in your heart. A desire to be a gladiator that fights for the things that are important, that's filled with passion and people respect passion. The passion that have changed the world are not the wealthiest, not the most talented, not the most educated. The people that have changed the world for good or bad are the most passionate. God has placed within our heart passion. He has passion for us. He loves us so very much. Think about how much passion Jesus Christ has for you. He has so much passion for us that He gave His life and He went through all the pain and all the hurt because He loves you that much. Just think about how much He loves you and much passion He wants you to have for Him and how much passion He wants you to have in life. Just watch this clip from Mel Gibson's The Passion of The Christ...

- **Possible movie clip from The Passion of The Christ**

Just watching that little clip moves me. It moves me so much to think of how much Jesus Christ loves me. It's such a passion for me and such a passion for you. I know some of you are going through some real struggles. You are going through some problems and difficulties and you may think no one really cares what I am going through. He cares. He cares so much He gave His life for you. He knows everything you are going through and He cares so much. It's really my prayer for you this morning that you would just feel His love rain down upon you in the next few moments and you will just allow His love for you, His passion for you just to feel you up. Jesus said all through the New Testament that I am the living water. If you drink my cup, you'll never thirst again. He'll fill you up. Then He said another time that it's like a spring that overflows from within you. It just goes all over the place, this living water. I just want you right now in the next few moments, just to let the rain of God's love fall down upon your heart. What I want you to get is just a glimpse. That is my prayer for you this morning. That you would just get a little glimpse of how much God loves you. How much passion He has for you. Some pastors rant and they rave and they tell you that you need to love God more. They hit their Bible and they pound the pulpit. They say you just need to love God more. That's not true at all. What you need is not to love God more. What you need is just to know just how much God loves you. Just a little bit. If we could just gain a little perspective on how much He loves us then it would just set us free to surrender everything we already have. Just to trust Him with our whole lives. He is so trustworthy because He loves us so much.



- **Possible Special Song here**

I want you to listen to this song and as you do I just pray that you would feel His love filling you up with His passion. Just remember how passionate He is about you. As it fills you up I hope it will just overflow in your life, in your family, in everything you do. The passion would just come out and people would see it in you. Not weirdness. Not being someone who is spiritually strange, but being someone that just loves God with all their heart. That people would look in and say that's what I want.

I want to give you a little puzzle piece today so that you will remember the passion puzzle for a no-regrets life, the kind of life you were created to live; a life of love, integrity, forgiveness and enthusiasm.