

Brent Alderman  
240.818.3053

[brent.alderman@capitolcom.org](mailto:brent.alderman@capitolcom.org)

## FINDING HOPE IN THE BREVITY OF LIFE (James 4:13-15)

*Over the weekend, we were all shocked to get the news of the sudden passing of Senator Wayne Norman. The remembrances that have poured in from those who knew him are both heart-warming and heart-breaking at the same time. He is being remembered as a genuinely friendly, caring man who loved his family and being a legislator and attorney. It is clear that many will miss him.*

*Anytime we hear of someone's death, we often are reminded of our own mortality. Senator Norman's death should cause each of us to stop and consider the reality that we all will also face an end to our earthly lives. The Scriptures provide us important direction on how to think about our future.*

**James 4:13-15 - Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit" — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."**

### DEATH IS A REALITY FOR ALL OF US

We live in a fallen world in which we all have sinned. No one is immune from sin and the consequences of it. Because of sin, our world decays. We age and bear the effects of decline in our bodies. This is our reality ever since the first man and woman disobeyed God. He is the one who judges us with death. No one escapes it.

*Romans 3:23 – **For all have sinned** and fall short of the glory of God.*

*Romans 5:12 - **Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned***

*Hebrews 9:27 – **...it is appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgement,***

Physical death is God's judgement for sin for all people. But as the title of this study says, that's not all there is to the message - there is still hope.

### LIFE ON EARTH IS SHORT

James warns us not to assume we have plenty of time on the earth, making our plans without considering God's will. We are not in ultimate control of our lives and it is arrogant to think that we are the deciders of our own destinies. God is the one who gives life and he is the only one who can legitimately take life.

The length of life here on earth is called a "mist" in this passage. When God created humans, he made us in his image which means we are eternal souls. After this earthly life, eternity is still before us. Billy Graham died last month at the age of 99, but his life was still a vapor that just appeared for a moment when compared to eternity.

### SEPARATION IS PAINFUL

As we think about the truths about death, let's also acknowledge that it is hard for those of us left behind when a loved one passes and we should be sensitive to the needs of those who mourn this kind of loss. There is great comfort friends and families can experience when condolences are given and expressions of love are shown. We should all look for ways to ease the pain these loved ones feel.

One of the main ministries we can have with families who are going through the loss of a loved one is prayer. In recent days, the expression "thoughts and prayers" has taken a beating from those who believe it is just a passive platitude that carries no real meaning apart from any other action. It is true that practical actions are often needed in a troubling situation, but we also need to acknowledge that prayer is also active, not passive, and can be a tremendous encouragement to hurting people as God acts on their behalf.

*Philippians 4:6, 7 - ...do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And **the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.***

*2 Corinthians 1:3, 4 - Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and **God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.***

These verses and many others point to the truth that there is peace and comfort available from God in times of distress and our prayers for grieving friends are not wasted when we truly seek God to work in their lives through their loss. We cannot afford to despise the power of prayer and should let it be our first action when comfort is needed.

## DEATH CAN BE A SHOCK

Reading the comments on social media regarding Senator Norman's death revealed several patterns. Many folks shared that "he will be missed". Other common statements were "I was shocked to hear" and "I can't believe he is gone". It's often normal to feel blindsided by the sudden death of someone we know. We don't stop to think that whenever we interact with someone, it might be the last time we see them, although we know it's true.

The Bible plainly tells us that our lives, in God's plan and timing, have a certain length. The book of Job refers to our lives like this:

*Job 14:5 - Since **his days are determined**, and the number of his months is with you, and you have appointed his limits that he cannot pass,*

Also, there is a crucial principle to learn from Psalm 90, written by Moses, which puts our lives into better perspective.

*Psalm 90:10, 12 - The years of our life are seventy, or even by reason of strength eighty; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly*

*away. So **teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.***

Senator Norman was only 62. My dad died at 56. You know others who died "early" or "young". But these verses teach us that God appoints our days according to his will. So, in truth, no one ever really dies before their time. Since life is so short and God determines its length, we should commit ourselves to learn what is truly important in life.

*Men become humble as they look into the grave which is so soon to be their bed, their passions cool in the presence of mortality, and they yield themselves up to the dictates of unerring wisdom; but this is only the case when the Lord himself is the teacher; he alone can teach to real and lasting profit.*

- Charles H. Spurgeon -

## DEATH CAN LEAD TO LIFE

*Romans 6:23 - For the wages of sin is death, but **the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***

This is the good news of the gospel. We are not without hope, but there is a Savior who can deliver us safely to eternal life with him. Are you ready to leave this world? You may not have another day – only God knows that. For anyone who believes in Christ and gives their life to him, there is no need to fear death or separation from God for eternity.

*John 3:16, 17 - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that **whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.** For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*

## BIBLE STUDY

Legislators and Staff (During Session)  
Thursdays, 8:00 a.m.  
Room 153, House Office Building