

# Sermon Discussion Guide

## Living a Clockwise Life

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*So be careful how you live. Don't live like fools, but like those who are wise. Make the most of every opportunity in these evil days. Don't act thoughtlessly but understand what the Lord wants you to do. Ephesians 5:15-17 (NLT)*

Living a clockwise life means paying close attention to how we conduct ourselves, discerning what is right and acting upon it, stewarding our time with caution and intentionality, and recognizing what's really important and responding accordingly. One of the greatest dangers we face today is personal and missional drift. God's pathway to a clockwise life includes The Great Commandment: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart," and The Great Commission: "Go and make disciples of all nations." The enemy's counterclockwise attack is guilt, distraction, and excuses. The clockwise response is to learn from the past, to be mindfully aware of distractions, to take decisive action, and to make our days count. Let's *Talk It Over!*

**OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.**

1. Ephesians 5:15-17 at the top of the page gives some specific instructions on how we are to live. In your group, list out all of the instructions given in this verse. Which of these points stands out to you?
2. Ephesians tells us to live "like those who are wise." Wisdom is defined as the soundness of an action or decision reached when you apply your experience, knowledge, and good judgment and then act on it. Talk about an experience you've had that helped you develop wisdom. What opportunities has the Lord given you to make the most of your experience?

*So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1 (NLT)*

3. One of the greatest dangers we face today is personal and missional drift. Examples of missional drift could include Harvard and Yale which started as institutions to train Christian pastors. Can you give other examples of people or organizations which have undergone personal or missional drift?

*Love the Lord your God with all your heart... soul... and mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.... Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to do everything I have commanded you. Matthew 22:36-40; 28:19-20*

4. These verses serve as the foundation for five eternal purposes (see question 5) God has for your life. If we do not have equal emphasis on all five, we suffer from "spiritual deformity." Which one do you think you have over-emphasized?

*And the Lord – who is the spirit – makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. 2 Corinthians 3:18 (NLT)*

5. As we grow in the five purposes (worship, serve, share, belong, and grow) we become more like Jesus. Which purpose do you need to concentrate on for the following year?

*...but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead... Philippians 3:13 (NLT)*

6. As we live a clockwise life, we will face the enemy's counterclockwise attacks of guilt, distractions, and excuses. What does Philippians 3:13 say about a clockwise response? Talk over practical ways to apply this verse and avoid derailment.

*...let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. Hebrews 12:1(NLT)*

7. Both bad things and good things can distract us from the best things. James 1:22 (NLT) says, "Don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says." What practical steps can we take to do the best things rather than what we have always done? How can we apply Hebrews 12:1 and James 1:22 to not merely count our days, but also make our days count?

### Diving Deeper (optional)

*Teach us to make the most of our time, so that we may grow in wisdom. Psalm 90:12 (NLT)*

Moses prayed Psalm 90:12 after realizing that the Israelites would not cross over to the Promised Land due to their rebellion. Unlike the Israelites, we have not lost our opportunity—we are here now and can make the most of the opportunities we have. Share with the group some ways you can make the most of your time, live a more clockwise life, and grow in wisdom.

**REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.**



## Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

### Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- **Icebreaker:** What are some ways you “make your days count” in your clockwise life?
- **Goals:** To pay attention to how we conduct ourselves, to discern what’s right and act upon it, to steward our time with caution and intentionality, and to recognize what’s important and respond accordingly. To be aware of personal and missional drift. To follow God’s pathway to a clockwise life including The Great Commandment: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart,*” and The Great Commission: “*Go and make disciples of all nations.*” To resist the enemy’s counterclockwise attacks including guilt, distraction, and excuses. To respond in a clockwise fashion by learning from the past, being mindfully aware of distractions, taking decisive action, and making our days count.
- **Final Prayer:** Heavenly Father, help us to avoid the dangers of personal and missional drift. We want to follow your pathway to a clockwise life including The Great Commandment: “*Love the Lord your God with all your heart,*” and The Great Commission: “*Go and make disciples of all nations.*” Help us to avoid the enemy’s counterclockwise attacks of guilt, distraction, and excuses. Instead, help us to learn from the past, to avoid distractions, to take decisive action, and to make our days count. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

### Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

### Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.