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One of my great joys is being a dad. God has blessed me with three of the most amazing girls. Jordan, Jaidyn, and Jaksyn, thank you for filling my life with such joy. Thank you for filling my life with the very breadth of God. Thanks for overflowing my bucket. I love being your daddy.

Contents

Foreword	7
1. Live Life to the Fullest	9
2. Know That You Are Going to Die	17
3. Seize the Day!	27
4. Fight Fear	35
5. Use Time Wisely	45
6. Lighten Up . . . Your Schedules	55
7. Don't Waste Your Mind	63
8. Treasure Your Body	69
9. Choose Your Friends Wisely	77
10. Spread the Love	85
Epilogue	91
Notes	93

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Foreword

Early on, Keith challenges us to “light a fire in our lives.” Then, with inspired craftsmanship, he proceeds to counsel us on how to build that fire until it has the impact of true, Spirit-filled wisdom.

Read to be inspired, challenged, and propelled into fulfilling God’s call on your life.

Coach Bill McCartney
Chairman Emeritus, Promise Keepers

Live Life to the Fullest 1

My family loves to ride roller coasters. Well, not all of us. My wife's idea of "living on the edge" is watching paint dry. Trust me, she's the love of my life, but she'd rather bob for an apple at a grenade stand than climb aboard a roller coaster of any size. For the rest of us, as Crush (the sea turtle in *Finding Nemo*) would say, "It's righteous!"¹

I'll never forget the day my daughter, Jaidyn, finally reached the necessary height requirement to cross over into what I call "the joy zone": Disney's Hollywood Studios' Rock 'n' Roller Coaster. She

was ecstatic, and for great reason. This bad boy coaster is an indoor, black-lit twister featuring a high-speed launch of 0–60 mph in 2.8 seconds—not to mention Aerosmith blasting through 125 onboard speakers. I screamed like a sissy. As soon as the ride ended I asked my daughter what she thought. With eyes dancing she exclaimed, “That rocked!” No pun intended.

TIME

The fact is, our lives are much like a roller coaster. Every one of us has been launched forward from 0–60 in 2.8 seconds, through twists and turns, soaring up and down. And like any roller coaster, about the time it begins, it’s over. As my dad says quite often, “It’s a quick trip.” I was reminded of that reality when dropping off my eldest daughter at the front door of her high school. It seemed like yesterday that I dropped her off at the entrance of her elementary school. The psalmist wrote: “LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered—how fleeting my life is” (Ps. 39:4 NLT).

Have you ever heard the phrase “time flies”? Well, actually it doesn’t. In fact, time is one of the few constants we have. Five minutes today is exactly what it was twenty years ago. So it shouldn’t surprise you that those same five minutes will be exactly the same twenty years from now. Time doesn’t fly, but it does tick away, and it’s important you understand that each tick is nonrefundable. Since our days are numbered, don’t you think we ought to do our best to make them count?

Perhaps you heard about the clock that was being treated for a nervous breakdown. When the clock master asked him about his troubles, he answered, “Well, I just can’t handle life anymore. I mean, look how much ticking I have to do. I tick 120 ticks a minute. That’s 7,200 ticks per hour. That’s 172,800 ticks per day, 1,209,600 ticks per week, and 62,899,200 per year!” Can you see this clock just wringing his hands?

“Whew, that’s a lot of ticks,” the clock master replied. “It’s no wonder you’ve been so ticked off lately!” Then he offered this advice: “The way I see it, in order for you to keep on ticking, you’re going to have to take each tick one tick at a time.”²

And we must do the same.

This book is about how we can recapture all that God has purposed and planned for our lives—to live out this life to its fullest. It’s a book filled with God’s promises in pointing us toward the life he longs for us to live. But to do this, we need to embrace two truths.

NO REGRETS

First, we must decide to live life with no regrets. In other words, make each moment count. Paul wrote in Ephesians, “So be careful how you live. Don’t live like ignorant people, but like wise people. Make good use of every opportunity you have” (Eph. 5:15–16 GNT). The fact is, most of us don’t make the best use of our time. We’d rather count minutes than embrace moments.

We live life as if we are sitting in a junior high history class. Do you remember watching the clock, wondering if class would ever

end? Each minute felt like an hour, and each day felt like a week. Some of you are still counting minutes. You go to work, punch a clock, and then watch it, anxiously awaiting the end of your shift. As each minute ticks away, so does your patience. What we often fail to realize is that each minute is a gift—one to be invested, not endured. Jesus told us that life is to be lived as an adventure: “My purpose is to give a rich and satisfying life” (John 10:10 NLT). In short, we are to live with no regrets.

A popular saying asserts, “Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away.” When was the last time you stopped long enough to stand in awe at the majestic hues God paints across the sky during an early morning sunrise? Somehow, somewhere along our journey, we started counting minutes rather than embracing moments. Life became, at best, a routine of endurance, rather than a journey of adventure. Helen Keller wrote, “Security is mostly a superstition. It does not exist in nature, nor do the children of men as a whole experience it. . . . Life is either a daring adventure, or nothing.”³

Luke’s gospel quotes Jesus saying, “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 pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry’” (Luke 7:31–32). In essence, Jesus was saying, “You just sat there. You chose not to experience life; you just endured it. I played the music—you didn’t dance. You always wanted to live, but never let yourself. You went through the motion, but never experienced the emotion.”

I challenge you to light a fire in your life—to be purposeful about living a life of no regrets. Make every minute count. Savor every moment you get. Take a risk. Make it your personal mission to proclaim with Paul, “I have no regrets” (2 Tim. 1:12 MSG). Take a page out of Peter’s book of life and step out of the boat—for it’s the only way we’ll ever walk on water and be with Jesus. It’s important to note that while people often talk about the end of the story where Peter started sinking due to his lack of faith, at least he didn’t shy away from trying.

In everything you do, in every word you speak, with every breath you breathe—live, love, and laugh. Plant both feet inside the door of your salvation, and slam the door of routine living behind you. Give Jesus everything you have. Chase him without restraint. I’ve heard it said that God doesn’t give us wings so we can jump; he calls us to jump and *then* gives us wings to fly. Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome, “No one who trusts God like this—heart and soul—will ever regret it” (Rom. 10:11 MSG).

NO REMORSE

The second way we live our lives to the fullest is to love without remorse. The Bible tells us, “Love your enemies. Help and give without expecting a return. You’ll never—I promise—regret it. Live out this God-created identity the way our Father lives toward us, generously and graciously, even when we’re at our worst” (Luke 6:35 MSG).

Loving without remorse means we learn to just say those loving words of affirmation. Never withhold words that can benefit

another. Don't wait for a special occasion like a birthday or anniversary to tell people what they mean to you or how much you appreciate them. Make each moment in someone's day magical, and start doing it today.

If you were to lose a loved one today, be it family or friend, would you be able to say, "We left nothing unsaid"? I strongly urge you: If there is anything you need to say, say it. If there's anything you need to do, do it. Never delay when there's love to say. Put down this book—pick up a phone, write a card, send an email—tell your loved ones they matter. Never leave anything unsaid.

If we're going to love without remorse then we must show it. As a general rule of thumb, any word spoken should be followed up by action. Be high on performance and low on unfulfilled promises. There will always be business to do and deadlines to meet. Don't live your life with good intentions unless you are committed to being intentional about actually doing the good. Show it!

I love to hunt, and part of hunting means taking trips that keep me away from those I love for several days. My wife is amazing, though. Well, actually, she is sneaky. She likes to hide love notes throughout my clothing. And it never fails—I'll be getting ready to hunt, snow is falling, temperatures hover well below zero, and I'll wonder what my family is up to. It is then that I begin to discover those little expressions of love. Those notes have become something I look forward to. How are you at expressing your love to others?

Loving without remorse requires us to share that love. Loving without remorse requires us to share that love. The Bible tells us

that we are to share our treasures, not bury them. “It is [ALWAYS] more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). I’ve discovered that those who live life the most—those who are generally the happiest—are also the ones who give the most. We can’t take anything with us when we die, so why not spend our living years investing in others?

Let me give you a little challenge when it comes to giving. Though we’ve likely all heard that no one can ever out-give God—we should try!

GOD’S INTENTION

God intended for *all* of us to live without regrets and love without remorse. It’s what Jesus modeled, and it’s what Scripture commands. Living this way gives us the confidence to go back and turn our wrongs into rights. It strengthens us to rebuild bridges that we may have once burned. It invites us to revisit love after it has been lost. It removes those “would have/should have/could have” regrets. It turns what may seem gray into ever-defining black and white. It wipes out doubt and fear. It resolves questions and heightens confidences. It always brings about the fullness of life, the joy of living, and the richness of love. It fuels us with great intention and keeps us ever focused on what God desires for our lives.

Solomon once wrote: “Oh, why didn’t I do what they told me? Why did I reject a disciplined life? Why didn’t I listen to my mentors, or take my teachers seriously? My life is ruined! I haven’t one

blessed thing to show for my life!” (Prov. 5:12–14 MSG). Life is a quick trip; don’t end it full of regret. God intends so much more for our lives than just living in the mundane. He desires that we truly live! And the way we do that is to live without regret and love without remorse.

REFLECT

In what ways am I just enduring life rather than experiencing it? What adjustments can I make?

How can I better express my love to my spouse, my children, my family, and my friends?

Whose intentions am I living for—mine or God’s?