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Live Your Dash

"Come now, you who say, 'Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit'; whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead you ought to say, 'If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.'" James 4:13-15

I recently read an excerpt from *The Dash: Making a Difference With Your Life*. It is a gift book created from the famous poem by Linda Ellis. I'm sure you have heard the poem. Ellis spoke of the story behind the poem:

People are always asking me what, in particular, inspired me to write this poem. I believe it was a combination of things in my life at the time. It was during a period when I was working for the top executives of a very large and successful corporation. It was a strict company with a tense working environment.

I began to watch how the priorities in many lives there had become misaligned. It seemed to me that the bosses were worrying far too much about that which was inconsequential in the scope of life.

Also, resonating in the back of my mind were the words from a letter which had been previously routed around the office. It had been written by the wife of an employee who was aware that she was dying. I was so moved by that letter that I saved a copy of it and continue to live by her words:

Regrets? I have a few. Too much worrying. I worried about finding the right husband and having children, being on time, being late and so on. It didn't matter. It all works out and it would have worked out without the worries and the tears.

If I would have only known then what I know now. But, I did and so do you. We're all going to die. Stop worrying and start loving and living.

Her words stuck with me. Her letter made me stop and think. This is it. This is all we get.

We certainly don't want to advocate against a good, strong work ethic. The Bible has much to say about avoiding laziness and being diligent. However, the Bible also cautions us about worrying over things. We are encouraged to cast our cares on the Lord and trust him to work things out for our good. The famous orator Pericles said: **"What you leave behind is not what is engraved in stone monuments, but what is woven into the lives of others."** May the Lord help us to live our dash without worrying and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble." Matthew 7:33-34