

## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

Paul Lawler: Al, good afternoon. It's great to see you today. And thankful to have this privilege for us to share together. It's been a great year. We're on the cusp of a brand new year. And so-

Al Henson: It's great to be here. Yes.

Paul Lawler: Yeah.

Al Henson: And I'm always excited to... in my mind, Paul, as we're setting here, I'm visioning those people that are listening.

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Al Henson: That man, that lady that's listening and the opportunity. Thank you for listening. And opportunity to perhaps say something today that would encourage them or give them some advice, or counsel, or wisdom, or revelation.

Paul Lawler: Yeah.

Al Henson: That would help them to move forward into their Christian life. It's just a beautiful thing today. So, topic is going to be the idea of living a life unto significance. How do I live so that my life is significant? And it's interesting in the scriptures, Paul, that often wisdom, and obviously, if I live a life of significance then I'm living in wisdom. That wisdom is tied into time and how we use our time and how we value our time.

For example, in Ephesians in chapter five verse 15 and 16, Paul is speaking. And he says, see then that you walk circumspectly, which means to walk with intentionality, to walk with a focused purpose. But don't walk intentionally as a fool, he says.

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: But rather to walk as one who's wise. So, it says, see then that you walk circumspectly, not as a fool, but as one that is wise. And a fool is, in the book of Proverbs, defined as someone who lives as if there is no God. Foolishness is living as if there is no God. And, for one to live in wisdom, is to live and use their time and value it in such a way that there is a God. And so, if there is a God, and he's infinitely wise, and he's created us, then what does he value and what should we value also? So, the next verse says, if you walk in wisdom, you will redeem. You will redeem the time.

Paul Lawler: As you share that, Al, that reminds me of another verse, Psalm 90 verse 12 that says, teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom. And so, let's ponder that just for a moment. First of all, that God would instruct us, be mindful that you only have a certain number of days. And allow wisdom to be derived from that reality. And, as we think about that a bit, James reminds us that life is a vapor. I just am mindful even right now, the seconds are ticking away.

Al Henson: Exactly.

## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

Paul Lawler: And we only have so much time to really live a life of significance.

Al Henson: And we really don't know how much time that we have.

Paul Lawler: That's right.

Al Henson: Only the Lord knows our days and how much they are. And actually I think, as we think about time, when I think of time I also think of money and I think of talent. And the reason why I do is because if you make 25 dollars an hour, then 25 dollars represents an hour of your life.

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: Because you worked and did a job for 25 hours. I once had a man. He gave a significant gift to our mission at Compassionate Hope. And I said, thank you. I said, this is significant. He said, oh, it's nothing. It's you. You're the one who's giving your time, and pouring your life out, and sacrificing it for the Lord. And I said, no, wait a minute. I said, this gift, based on what I would know about you, represents a hundred hours of your time. You worked a hundred hours to be able to give this gift to the least of these. And so, don't think this is small. If you take 24 hours a day, this man just gave five days or four and a half days of his life to the least of these and into eternity.

So, time is money and money is time. And to live in wisdom is to use your time wisely, which then Paul, I think leads us to what I think is the fundamental foundation question. What do we actually value? And, if we looked at our time and how we use it, it would demonstrate to us what we actually truly value.

Paul Lawler: That is a great thought. I remember once having an awakening just in terms of how the culture can affect us and certainly has affected my own life. But as you know, both of us spend lots of time in different areas of the world. And I was hosting a guest who is a pastor out of Asia. And it was his first trip to America. And, once he got through jet lag, he was staying down in our missionary suite. And we offered him the opportunity to go do some sightseeing. I said-

Al Henson: Which, if he was the typical American, that's what you'd be thinking he would want to do right away.

Paul Lawler: Absolutely. Absolutely. So, we got through his jet lag. And so, Missy and I, we're like, would you like to go to a museum? Would you like to see our zoo? And there were a couple of other things we mentioned. And he took all that in very graciously and took some time to think about it. Then he looked up and said to us, he says, pastor Paul, do you have a homeless shelter? And this particular pastor out of Asia had been set free from a heroin addiction. A group of Christians had prayed for him there and he actually was set free before he came to Christ. And he wanted to know more about Jesus.

And so, we ended up, rather than going sightseeing, we went to the homeless shelter. And, Al, while we were there, we prayed with a lot of of men who were broken, as we

## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

all can imagine. And, as we ministered among the least of these, there happened to be a young man there that also was addicted to heroin. And this pastor from Asia laid hands on him and prayed. And I know our listeners are aware that stories like this aren't necessarily common. I want to validate that. But there are times where God moves outside our box.

Al Henson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Paul Lawler: And we watched God set a young man free from years of heroin addiction. Our teams continued to go there. That was verified. And I'm mindful that here this pastor is serving in a culture outside the West. And, even when he's traveling, his heart is set on living a life that's significant and making his days count. We're all aware that one thing is certain for all of us. And I don't mean anything morbid by this when I say it, but it's true. We all have a certain, impending, definite death ahead of us.

Al Henson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Paul Lawler: Now, that can sound very morbid, I know. But what I'm sitting is just the reality that we all have a limited amount of time, which is why the Psalmist says, teach us, oh Lord, to number our days that we would gain perspective. We would gain a heart of wisdom in the reality that our time here to make a difference is limited.

Al Henson: Paul, I have had the opportunity to sit with men and women who have been, in the world's eyes, quite successful, leaders of corporations, and leaders of businesses, and even successful sportspeople, athletics. And, in setting with them, conversations have turned a bit to some honesty, some hard honesty. And they have said to me, with all of this, I still feel empty. Or sometimes they'll say, in all of this, I still feel unfulfilled. Or I've heard them say, I can't actually say that I know what joy really is or that I'm really happy. And what I've learned in life is success doesn't necessarily bring happiness.

And again, I don't want anyone listening to think that God is opposed to financial success, or to positional success, or even to success in people knowing who you are or who you're not. But the point is that those things don't make one significant. And just to those that are listening in, because we have so many listening that want to grow, I'd like to just make a point here that, in Christ you are significant. In him, you have become a son of God, a daughter of God, and you can be at rest. You no longer have to continue to search for significance. But only in those times of intimacy with Christ do you experience the emotions and the feelings of having a great sense of worth and value, especially to your creator.

But back now with that thought, back to these men and women that I'm setting with. And sometimes I'll look at them, Paul. And I'll say, I believe that God wants me to say to you that God has brought us together today because God wants to move you from success to significance. And then, invariably they'll agree, it seems, and say, okay, how do I do so? And I talk then about this matter of living in wisdom and matter of what do you value? And, if you begin to consider what do I value, then you have to value what

## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

God values because he's infinitely wise. And, if you value what God values, you value people.

Paul Lawler: That's good.

Al Henson: And, if you want to ask the question, Paul, how much does God value people? Go to the cross.

Paul Lawler: That's right.

Al Henson: One person was worth enough to God that he sent his only son to die for him and bear his sins on the cross.

Paul Lawler: Yeah.

Al Henson: And, if this is what God values, if we're going to live a life of significance and love is moving us, then we're asking the question, how do I give my life away to my my husband? How do I give my life away to my wife?

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: How do I serve the children that God's given? How do I serve my family? How do I serve those that I work with in the marketplace? How do I serve my neighbor across the street? How do I make time to serve and care for the nations and the least of these? When you love, you value God and God's purposes and you value God's creation, which is people. And then, you begin to pour your life into them or God's life in you, through you into them. And, when you do, you begin to bear fruit.

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: And you have a sense of now. Now my life is making a difference.

Paul Lawler: That's so good. You know, Al, this is a personal opinion, but I believe that the second most important issue of our life is fruit bearing. Obviously the most important is our salvation. But, after coming to know Jesus, it's bearing fruit. It is fulfilling the desired will of God in the way, just as you articulated, how I relate to my husband or wife, how I relate to my children, how I relate to least of these, how I relate in living a life of significance in Christ.

Al Henson: And bearing fruit can be observed in what kind of fruit am I actually bearing in my relationships.

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Al Henson: And I believe the kingdom is a living organism.

Paul Lawler: Yeah.

## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

Al Henson: It's a spiritual living organism.

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Al Henson: And so, the kingdom is all about relationships. And Christ has come to reconcile us to God and to reconcile us to each other. And the gospel has the power to do that through forgiveness, and mercy, and grace. And, as we're reconciled to God and to one another, then we're able to bear fruit of love and into other people's lives and share within the power of the gospel. And we see their lives being changed.

Paul Lawler: Absolutely. When we share around this topic and we're mindful of a life of fruit bearing, I know we should address some of this in one of our other broadcasts, and that is this relationship between abiding in Christ in prayer, in the word of God. But it doesn't stop there. It's also in living it out.

Al Henson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Paul Lawler: In joining Jesus, in how we relate to people, how we minister to the least of these.

Al Henson: There's a brother and sister, I'm going to be careful here, so I'm not even going to give a location. But God has really blessed them both spiritually and financially, physically. I have great admiration for them even spiritually. And I walked into their lives about seven, eight years ago and began to have conversations like this. And, every time I'd go back they, they'd want to talk to me. And I could tell there was still an unfulfilledness in their life. And these were generous, giving people.

But I went back recently and I walked in and I knew something was different. And so, I just started asking questions. And I found out that the wife had went out into the community and began to work in the community. And there was an international community there. And she had come across four teenagers that are of an Arab background that weren't making it in the schools because they didn't know English. And so, she stepped out of her comfort zone and she invited these four teenagers. She went and met with their families and said, I will begin to homeschool you.

Now here's what happened, Paul. She stepped into that and everyone around her was in shock. You don't have time for this. This is a lot of your life to give five days a week four or five hours a day to these four kids that you've never met.

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Al Henson: And so, she just began to do so. And she realized soon that she really had taken on more than she wanted to and she wasn't sure how to do this. She was sharing that with a friend. And friend said, I'll help you.

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Mm-hmm (affirmative).

## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

Al Henson: And I'm showing up now four or five months later and there's a team of four, or five, or six that are working together, pouring into the life of these four. And now, because they're making such a difference, their parents are watching this. And now, the four have come to Christ. And some of this Muslim community is beginning to watch this. And now, instead of the four or five involved-

Paul Lawler: Wow.

Al Henson: There are dozens involved. And the kingdom of God is growing and expanding.

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: But it took her... and I looked at and I said, you finally... you got it.

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative). That's so good.

Al Henson: You got it. You see it now.

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: And she looked back in tears and she said, brother Al, I can't tell you how happy I am and how fulfilled I am.

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Al Henson: Because what she was doing now, she had begun to value her time.

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: And value what God valued. And thought my 25 hours a week, these four are worth it. And God had a bigger than just the four. It's not only those four, but now those that are gathering around her, as you can see, and the impact they're beginning to open the doors into this community. And who knows in the next ten or 15 years, when one life is touched, you know how it's like a river that starts flowing that's ever widening until it spills out into eternity.

Paul Lawler: One of the things that that story illustrates and the point that you just made, people matter. That's a huge understatement, that they matter to God therefore they matter to us.

Al Henson: And again, as you say that, don't lose your thought, Paul. But, when you say that, again, people understand that one soul mattered so much to God that he sent his only son to die for them. And so, why wouldn't God ask us to invest our lives into the lives of others?

Paul Lawler: Well, that's so well said. And it ties in to really the question I was going to pose for the sake of just responding to our listeners as they may be thinking. And that is, how do we

## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

define what is significant? And really it ties in to what you just stated, that Jesus has demonstrated that, the heart of the father has demonstrated that, that people matter.

Al Henson: Yes. And, as you're listening, my first encouragement to you is to abide in Christ, to ask God to teach you that you might learn how to live in the spirit. Because in so doing you begin to have the thoughts of God, and the heart of God, and the fruit. The fruit bearing is not only the fruit of people, but it's also the fruits of the spirit. You bear love and love begins to move you. And, as love begins to move you, then ask the question, God, where do you want me to invest my time? And to what people do you want me to invest my time in? And also, because time is money and money is time, how do you want me to invest the monies that you put into my hand and steward those in such a way that they actually make a difference in people's lives?

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Al Henson: And, as we're coming toward the year end here, the end of this year, I would like to humbly suggest that people may want to consider Compassionate Hope Foundation as a means by which they could invest some of their funding as they're thinking about giving to the end of the year.

Paul, we bear this burden. God's given us 43 Homes of Hope, 800 plus rescued ones, and some of these are OSEC children, online sexual exploited children, children who have been sexually abused, some have been sold, labor traffic, sex traffic, child brides. They're beautiful creatures that sin was trying to destroy. And now, through the Compassionate Hope and the nationals that work with, they've been rescued. They've been given a home, food, shelter, clothing, education, and a plan, a spiritual, and educational, and character development plan. That one day they will rise up out of all of this and not only be blessed ones and self-sustainable ones, but they will be able to bless others.

And the burden every day, God, give us the monies. These are your sons and your daughters. Give us the finances that are needed to care for these in wisdom. And perhaps someone listening in might, as they're coming to the year end, and a lot of people think about year end giving, would consider, prayerfully consider Compassionate Hope Foundation as a wise stewardship of their funding.

Paul Lawler: Al, because I too have had the privilege of meeting many of these children, I can't think of a better way in this hour to make a difference, to bear fruit among the least of these. And to also make great impact in lives that are ripe for investing in. And I'm mindful, someone might ask, how could I do that? How could I follow up and make a difference, maybe give a gift? And so, I'm aware that people can go to [CompassionateHope.org](http://CompassionateHope.org) for more information as well as [SageTalkPodcast.com](http://SageTalkPodcast.com) to get more information.

Al Henson: And 60, 65 dollars will underwrite a child for an entire month. And Paul, I'm going to embarrass you just a moment. But you and your brother and your family, after a visit over and saw some of these kids, you came back and you decided that you wanted to... your mother had gone to be with Jesus and you wanted to build a home in honor of her.

## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

And someone listening in might like to build a home, or they might like to help in a significant way, to build a multipurpose building, or to help buy some land for a new Home of Hope, to do something more significant. And we're here. Call us and connect with us through an email. And then, we can have a phone conversation.

And God may be touching someone's heart. The most significant way in which God is doing this is moving on an individual's heart. And they themselves are teaming up with others, are putting together a group of people, and their underwriting, sponsoring an entire Home of Hope on a monthly basis. So, there's many ways to get hands in, heart in, feet in to the least of these on the other side of the world.

Paul Lawler: Yeah.

Al Henson: And I believe it is a wise stewardship and investment.

Paul Lawler: A beautiful way to bear fruit, it really is. Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom. Make our lives count. Be circumspect, as a that passage in Ephesians cited so beautifully.

Al Henson: And I think, as we come to an end today, just sort of the takeaway is, wisdom values what God values.

Paul Lawler: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Al Henson: And then, secondly, when we value what God values, then it's demonstrated in how we use our time.

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: And how we invest our time. And what people really need is you. They need us. They need someone to step into their lives and invite them. Like this lady, she stepped into the lives of these four kids, and then invited them into her life. So, what do we value? What we value, we put time into. And then thirdly, time is money and money is time.

Paul Lawler: Yes.

Al Henson: And, when you invest money as a wise steward, you're wisely giving your time into God's eternal purposes and plans.

Paul Lawler: Amen. So well said. Al, would you close us in prayer today, praying for these that are both listening as well as these precious children.

Al Henson: Father, we thank you that you've set your love upon us and nothing can separate us from the love of God. And our prayer today to each man, each woman that's listening in that you know them, you see them. And we pray you'd meet them at their point of need. Lord, I'm always aware that maybe someone is listening that needs the healing of God, that needs the guidance of God, that needs the counsel of God, that needs the



## SageTalk Episode 13: Living a Life of Significance

wisdom of God. And we pray that that would be brought into their lives by your grace. And we do pray, father, that you would touch hearts for you want to meet the needs of the least of these around the world through the hearts, and lives, and giving of your people. And so, we pray that you would touch hearts. Lord, there is no I in your work. There's an us. And I pray someone listening in might become one of those us's, one of those we's that join hands with us to reach unto the least of these in Southeast Asia. In Jesus name, amen.

Paul Lawler: Amen.