

SIFAH LECTURE SERIES

Your Life in Days: How the Believer Spends Time That Never Returns

A practical lecture — knowledge you can act on

Ustadh Bilal Saleem

July 2026 · ~30 min read · The Value of Time



SIFAH

SCHOOL OF ISLAMIC
FOUNDATIONS &
ADVOCACY FOR HUMANITY

Your Life in Days: How the Believer Spends Time That Never Returns

*Time is the one wealth you cannot save, cannot buy back, and will be asked about in detail.
Learn how the believer turns fleeting hours into everlasting profit.*

WHY THIS MATTERS

The Treasure You Are Spending Right Now

My dear brother, my dear sister, let me begin with something I want you to feel rather than simply read. There is a treasure that every single one of us owns. It is being spent right now, whether you use it wisely or throw it away, and once it is gone, no amount of money, no amount of power, and no amount of regret can ever bring it back. It is not gold, though gold is precious. It is not your health, though health is a crown. It is your **time**. The breath you just took as your eyes crossed this line will never return to you. The hour that has passed since you last checked the clock has left your account, and it will never be credited back.

We are strange creatures when it comes to this treasure. We speak endlessly about saving money, saving energy, saving our data. We install apps to track our spending and our steps. But have you ever met a single human being who managed to save even one minute? Time cannot be stored. It cannot be banked. It cannot be poured into a jar and kept for a rainy day. It can only be spent, and it is being spent whether you are asleep or awake, whether you are in the masjid or lost in your screen. And here is the sobering part: the question that will follow you into your grave is not *how much* time you were given, for that was decided long before you were born. The question will be *how you spent* the time you had.

So serious is this matter that the Creator of the heavens and the earth, the One who owns all things, swears an oath by it. And when Allah swears by a thing, my brother, my sister, He is grabbing us by the shoulders and saying: pay attention, you are in danger of missing something. Listen to how He opens an entire surah, one of the shortest and heaviest in the Book:

وَالْعَصْرِ * إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ * إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ

*By time. **Indeed, mankind is in loss**, except those who believe and do righteous deeds and advise one another to truth and advise one another to patience.*

Surah Al-Asr (103:1-3)

Reflect with me on what Allah is teaching in these few short lines. He swears by time itself, and then He declares that the whole of humanity is drowning in loss. Every human being alive is watching the capital of his life drain away with every passing second, like a block of ice melting in the summer heat. And then Allah names the only survivors, the only ones who escape the loss: those who believe, those who act righteously, those who call one another to the truth, and those who hold one another to patience. Everyone else is losing. The only people who profit from their melting hours are the ones who convert them, before they vanish, into faith and good deeds and mutual encouragement.

Imam al-Shafi'i, may Allah have mercy on him, was so struck by this surah that he said something the scholars have repeated for over a thousand years: *If Allah had revealed no proof to His creation except this surah, it would have been sufficient for them.* Why would he say something so bold about three short lines? Because they contain the entire formula for a life that is not wasted. Time is passing. You are in loss. The only escape is faith, righteous action, and helping others toward both. So let me ask you honestly, as we sit together at the start of this lesson: right now, in this very moment that you are spending reading these words, are you among the people of profit or the people of loss?

THE TWO GREAT DECEPTIONS

The Blessings You Only Notice When They Leave

The Prophet ﷺ, who knew our hearts better than we know them ourselves, warned us that time is a blessing we are especially prone to squander. And he paired it with another blessing that we take completely for granted until the day it walks out the door. Listen to how precisely he named the two gifts most people fail to value:

نِعْمَتَانِ مَغْبُونٌ فِيهِمَا كَثِيرٌ مِنَ النَّاسِ: الصِّحَّةُ وَالْفَرَاغُ

*There are two blessings in which many people are cheated: **good health and free time.***

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 6412 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

The word the Prophet ﷺ chose here is extraordinary. He used the word *maghbun*, which is the word for a person who has been cheated in a business deal, someone who sold something incredibly valuable for a fraction of its worth and only realised he had been robbed after the buyer walked away smiling. Imagine a man who inherits a priceless antique, a family treasure worth a fortune, and sells it at a garage sale for the price of a sandwich because he had no idea what he was holding. That is *maghbun*. And the Prophet ﷺ is telling us: that is exactly what most of us are doing with our health and our free time.

Ibn Hajar, may Allah have mercy on him, explains this beautifully. A man enjoys good health and open, empty hours, and he does nothing valuable with them. Then illness comes, or a mountain of responsibilities buries him, and he looks back with an aching heart at all those empty afternoons he could have filled with good. How many of us, when we were young and strong and free, filled our days with nothing of lasting value, and now, older and more burdened, would give anything to have those years back? My dear brother, my dear sister, the healthy person who has free time is a wealthy person who does not know he is wealthy. Most of us will only discover the true worth of our health when we are lying in a hospital bed, and the true worth of our free time when we are drowning in obligations. And by then, the treasure has already slipped through our fingers.

This is precisely why the Prophet ﷺ gave us one of the most practical pieces of advice ever spoken. He advised a man, and through that man he advised every one of us, to seize five things before five others overtake them. Listen to the race he is describing:

اَغْتَنِمْ خَمْسًا قَبْلَ خَمْسٍ: شَبَابَكَ قَبْلَ هَرَمِكَ، وَصِحَّتَكَ
قَبْلَ سَقَمِكَ، وَغِنَاكَ قَبْلَ فَقْرِكَ، وَفَرَاغَكَ قَبْلَ
شُغْلِكَ، وَحَيَاتَكَ قَبْلَ مَوْتِكَ

Seize five before five: your youth before your old age, your health before your sickness, your wealth before your poverty, your free time before your busyness, and your life before your death.

Source: Al-Mustadrak of al-Hakim: 7846 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Look at how every single pairing is a race against time. The young will grow old. The healthy will fall sick. The rich may become poor. The free will become busy. And the living, every one of us, will die. There are no exceptions. The believer is simply the one who runs ahead of these changes, who fills the good season with good deeds before the hard season arrives, because he knows the hard season is coming for everyone. He is not a pessimist. He is a realist who refuses to be cheated in the greatest transaction of his life.

THE CROWN ON THEIR HEADS

You Own the Whole World and Do Not Know It

Let us pause on health for a moment, because it is paired with time for a deep reason: a person needs both strength *and* hours to do good, and losing either one cripples the other. What use are open hours to a body wracked with pain? And what use is a strong body to a man buried under work with no time to breathe? You need both. And most of us have both right now, this very morning, and we walk around feeling like we have nothing.

How rarely do we thank Allah for a single day without pain. We notice our backs only when they ache. We notice our eyes only when they begin to dim. We notice our hearts only when they skip and flutter

and frighten us. We take a thousand silent, functioning blessings for granted every single hour. Yet listen to the astonishing standard the Prophet ﷺ set for a life of wealth:

مَنْ أَصْبَحَ مِنْكُمْ آمِنًا فِي سِرِّهِ، مُعَافًى فِي جَسَدِهِ،
عِنْدَهُ قُوَّةٌ يَوْمِهِ، فَكَأَنَّمَا حِيزَتْ لَهُ الدُّنْيَا

Whoever among you wakes in the morning secure in his home, healthy in his body, with enough food for his day, it is as though the whole world has been gathered up and given to him.

Source: Jami' at-Tirmidhi: 2346 · **Authenticity:** Hasan

Stop and measure yourself against this hadith. Are you safe in your home tonight, not fleeing bombs, not fearing the door being kicked in? Is your body more or less working, able to stand, to walk, to see these words? Do you have food for today? Then, according to the words of the Messenger of Allah ﷺ, it is as though you own the entire world. And yet how many of us, possessing all three, feel poor, feel deprived, feel like life is passing us by while everyone else gets more?

My dear brother, my dear sister, the believer who truly grasps this stops waiting. He stops saying, *I will start worshipping properly when my situation improves, when I have more money, when the kids are older, when things settle down.* He looks at the health and security Allah has handed him this very morning and he understands: this is the season of action. This strong body I have today is a borrowed tool that will one day be returned to its Owner. The wise servant uses the tool for his Lord while it still answers to his command, while the knees still bend for sujud and the tongue still moves for dhikr. Use your health before your sickness, the Prophet ﷺ told us. And there is no better time to begin than the hour you are in right now.

THE GREAT QUESTIONING

Your Feet Will Not Move Until You Answer

It is not enough to know that time is precious. We have to know, deep in our bones, that we will be held accountable for it, in detail, before Allah. Picture the Day of Resurrection. The crowds, the heat, the

terror, the waiting. And the Prophet ﷺ tells us that on that Day, no servant's foot will move even a single step from where he is standing until he has answered a set of piercing questions:

لَا تَزُولُ قَدَمَا عَبْدٍ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ حَتَّى يُسْأَلَ عَنْ عَمَلِهِ
فِيمَ أَفْنَاهُ، وَعَنْ عِلْمِهِ فِيمَ فَعَلَ، وَعَنْ مَالِهِ مِنْ أَيْنَ
اِكْتَسَبَهُ وَفِيمَ أَنْفَقَهُ، وَعَنْ جِسْمِهِ فِيمَ أَبْلَاهُ

*The two feet of a servant will not move on the Day of Resurrection until he is asked about **his life and how he spent it, his knowledge and what he did with it, his wealth, how he earned it and where he spent it, and his body and how he wore it out.***

Source: Jami' at-Tirmidhi: 2417 · **Authenticity:** Hasan Sahih

Look carefully, and count with me. Of these questions, two are directly about time. He will be asked about his life, the whole span of it, and how he caused it to pass away. And then, remarkably, he will be asked about his youth *specifically*, singled out from the rest of his life. Why the double question? Because the years of strength and energy carry a heavier weight of responsibility. Allah gave you a stretch of years when your body was strong, your mind was sharp, your health was full, and your time was largely your own. And He will ask: what did you build with it?

So this is a special call to our young brothers and sisters, the ones who imagine that the time for seriousness lies somewhere far ahead, in some misty future after they have finished having their fun. My beloved young brother, my beloved young sister: the days of your youth are the most valuable hours you will ever own in your entire life, and they are draining away right now, at this very second, while you assume they will last forever. The young person who grows up in the worship of his Lord is so beloved to Allah that the Prophet ﷺ named him among the seven whom Allah will shade on the Day when there is no shade except His. Do not throw away the very years that could earn you that shade. They are not coming back.

How a Whole Lifetime Slips Away

So what is it, exactly, that causes us to hemorrhage this precious capital? Allah names the culprit directly, and it is worth confronting honestly. It is the endless chase after more: more money, more status, more possessions, more distraction, more of everything. It swallows our attention and our years until, quite literally, the grave interrupts it. Listen:

أَهَاكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ * حَتَّى زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

Competition for more and more distracts you, until you visit the graves.

Surah At-Takathur (102:1-2)

Look at the precision of the words. The pursuit of more does not merely occupy us; the verb Allah uses means it *distracts* us, it pulls our gaze away from the one thing that actually matters, and it keeps our eyes fixed on it until the visit to the graveyard arrives, whether we come as mourners or as the one being buried. Here is a truth that should shake us: a person can spend an entire lifetime busy, productive, always occupied, always chasing, and arrive at death having never once truly turned toward Allah. Because being busy is not the same as being beneficial. The hours were full, yes. But full of what?

My dear brother, my dear sister, the most dangerous waste of time is not the obvious laziness of a person lying on the couch doing nothing. That kind of waste we can see, and it bothers our conscience. The truly dangerous waste is the constant, frantic activity that produces absolutely nothing for the Hereafter, the life crowded with motion and completely empty of meaning. We are the busiest generation that has ever lived, and possibly one of the emptiest. And on the Day we are raised, that whole long, exhausting, busy life will suddenly seem to have lasted no longer than a single afternoon. Allah tells us how the people will answer when they are asked how long they lingered on the earth:

قَالَ كَمْ لَبِثْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ عَدَدَ سِنِينَ * قَالُوا لَبِثْنَا يَوْمًا
أَوْ بَعْضَ يَوْمٍ فَاسْأَلِ الْعَادِينَ * قَالَ إِنْ لَبِثْتُمْ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا
لَوْ أَنَّكُمْ كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

*He will say, how long did you remain on earth, in number of years? They will say, we remained a day or part of a day; ask those who keep count. He will say, **you remained only a little, if only you had known.***

Surah Al-Mu'minun (23:112-114)

Seventy years. Eighty years. In that moment they will feel like a single day, or even part of a day. All those decades we thought were so long, all that time we assumed would never run out, will shrink in the memory to almost nothing at all. *If only you had known*, Allah says. And that is the whole point of this lesson, my dear brother, my dear sister. If we truly knew, today, right now, how short this life really is and how quickly it will seem to have passed, not one of us would waste even a single hour of it. So let us learn the lesson now, while knowing it can still change us, rather than later, when knowing it can only break our hearts.

THE VOICES WE SHOULD HEAR NOW

The Regret of Those Who Ran Out of Time

If we could somehow hear the voices of those who have already crossed over to the other side, my brother, my sister, we would hear one sound rising above every other sound: the sound of regret over wasted time. And in His mercy, Allah lets us hear those voices *now*, while we can still act on the warning, so that we are not among them *later*, when action is no longer possible. He tells us of the people of the Fire, crying out for a second chance that will never be granted:

وَهُمْ يَصْطَرِخُونَ فِيهَا رَبَّنَا أَخْرِجْنَا نَعْمَلْ صَالِحًا غَيْرَ
الَّذِي كُنَّا نَعْمَلُ أَوَلَمْ نُعَمِّرْكُم مَّا يَتَذَكَّرُ فِيهِ مَن تَذَكَّرَ
وَجَاءَكُمُ النَّذِيرُ فَذُوقُوا فَمَا لِلظَّالِمِينَ مِن نَّصِيرٍ

*And they will cry out therein, our Lord, take us out; we will do righteousness, other than what we used to do. But **did We not give you a life long enough for whoever would take heed to take heed? And the warner came to you.** So taste, for the wrongdoers there is no helper.*

Surah Fatir (35:37)

Listen to the crushing reply they are given. *Did We not give you a life long enough for anyone who wished to take heed to take heed?* In other words: you had time. You were not snatched away in childhood. You were given years, and months, and weeks, and Fridays, and Ramadans, warning after warning after warning, and you let them all slide past you. The tragedy of the people of the Fire is not that they were denied the opportunity. It is that they were *given* the opportunity, generously, repeatedly, and they wasted every bit of it. That is what makes their regret so unbearable.

And the same desperate plea escapes the lips of a person the moment death arrives. Allah paints the scene of the dying man begging to be sent back for just a little more time, only to learn that the door has already closed and locked behind him:

حَتَّىٰ إِذَا جَاءَ أَحَدَهُمُ الْمَوْتُ قَالَ رَبِّ ارْجِعُونِ *
لَعَلِّي أَعْمَلُ صَالِحًا فِيمَا تَرَكْتُ كَلَّا إِنَّهَا كَلِمَةٌ هُوَ
قَائِلُهَا وَمِنْ وَرَائِهِمْ بَرْزَخٌ إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ يُبْعَثُونَ

*Until, when death comes to one of them, he says, my Lord, send me back, that I might do righteousness in that which I left behind. **No! It is only a word he is saying.** And behind them is a barrier until the Day they are resurrected.*

Surah Al-Mu'minun (23:99-100)

My Lord, send me back, so that I may do good in the time I left behind. But there is no sending back, my dear brother, my dear sister. The time we leave behind cannot be reclaimed at any price. And here is the thought I want you to hold onto, because it is the most powerful realisation in this entire lesson: the wise believer treats every present moment as the very moment that the dying man is begging to be given. You are living, right now, inside the answer to that man's prayer. This hour you are holding in your hands is exactly the hour he is screaming to be sent back for. Will you spend it the way he wishes he had? Or the way he actually did?

Al-Hasan al-Basri, may Allah have mercy on him, captured our fleeting lives in an image I have never been able to forget. He said: *O son of Adam, you are nothing but a number of days. Whenever a day passes, part of you has passed away.* Think deeply on that. Your life is not a vague, open, endless expanse. It is a precise number of days, counted and known to Allah, and each day that ends is not merely a day spent, it is a piece of *you* that has died and will never return. The man who truly understands this watches the sunset differently from everyone around him. Where others see only the end of a day, he sees a portion of his own life being folded up and sealed, ready to be presented before his Lord.

Live Like a Traveller Passing Through

So how, then, should the believer hold this world in his heart, knowing his time in it is so heartbreakingly brief? The Prophet ﷺ gave us the perfect image, and he did not just say it casually. He took hold of the shoulder of Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him, gripping him physically to press the meaning into his very body, and he said:

كُنْ فِي الدُّنْيَا كَأَنَّكَ غَرِيبٌ أَوْ عَابِرُ سَبِيلٍ

Be in this world as though you were a stranger, or a traveller passing along a road.

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 6416 · **Authenticity:** Sahih

Think about how a traveller behaves. A man crossing a foreign land on his way home does not buy a mansion in a place he is leaving tomorrow. He does not sink his heart and his hopes into a rest stop. He takes from the road only what carries him onward to his destination, and he keeps his eyes fixed firmly on the home he is journeying toward. He is content with simple lodging because he knows it is temporary. My dear brother, my dear sister, this world is the road, not the home. And the believer who keeps this alive in his heart never makes the fatal mistake of confusing the journey with the destination, never mistakes the motel for the mansion that awaits him.

Ibn Umar himself, may Allah be pleased with him, so absorbed the urgency of his teacher's words that he added a counsel of his own that I want you to write upon your heart. He would say: *If you reach the evening, do not wait for the morning, and if you reach the morning, do not wait for the evening. Take from your health for your sickness, and from your life for your death.* Do not wait. Do not assume the next morning will come, or that the next evening is guaranteed. Take from your strength now, while you actually have it, and store it up for the day when you will have none of it left. This is not gloom, my brother, my sister. This is the clearest, most liberating wisdom there is. The person who lives each day as though it might be his last does not waste it, and yet, strangely, he is also the person most at peace, because he has left nothing undone that he would be ashamed to meet his Lord with.

The Deadly Word: I Will Do It Later

Now let us get practical, because knowing all of this is worthless if we do not act. Let me introduce you to the single greatest thief of a believer's time. It is not television. It is not even the phone, not directly. It is a mindset, a single gentle word that Shaytan whispers into the ears of good people who fully intend to do good. Shaytan is far too clever to tell a believer to simply abandon the good, because he knows the believer would refuse and recoil. So instead he whispers one soft, reasonable, endlessly patient word: *later*.

Pray later. Repent later. Start memorising later. Give the charity later. Call your parents later. Begin taking your religion seriously later. He lets you keep your beautiful good intention, he even lets you feel good about it, while he quietly robs you of the action, day after day after day, until the time simply runs out. And the Qur'an warns us of the exact moment this regret finally detonates, the moment the soul realises that all its comfortable delaying cost it absolutely everything:

أَنْ تَقُولَ نَفْسُ يَا حَسْرَتَا عَلَىٰ مَا فَرَّطْتُ فِي جَنْبِ
اللَّهِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُ لَمِنَ السَّآخِرِينَ

*Lest a soul should say, **oh, how great is my regret over what I neglected in my duty to Allah,** and I was indeed among those who mocked.*

Surah Az-Zumar (39:56)

Oh, how great is my regret over what I neglected. This is the cry of the procrastinator, the one who always genuinely meant to change tomorrow, until tomorrow finally ran out of tomorrows. And I want you to understand that this danger is real even for sincere, believing people, not just for the openly heedless. Let me tell you the story of a true and faithful Companion, Ka'b ibn Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, a man who loved Allah and His Messenger deeply.

When the call came for the army to march out to Tabuk in the burning, punishing heat, Ka'b fully intended to prepare and go. He was no hypocrite. He had the means, his mounts were ready and healthy, the money was there. But he delayed. Each morning he told himself he would get ready that day and catch up with the army. And each evening came and he had done nothing. He kept saying *tomorrow, tomorrow*, until one morning he woke up and the entire army was gone, and he was left behind, not out of cowardice, not out of hypocrisy, but purely out of procrastination. And when the Prophet ﷺ returned, Ka'b, to his eternal credit, refused to lie about it. Allah then tested him and two others with fifty long days of being completely shunned by the whole community, his greetings left unanswered, his own wife kept from him, until at last the verses of his forgiveness descended from the heavens. Listen to how he described those days:

حَتَّى إِذَا طَالَ عَلَيَّ ذَلِكَ ... وَضَاقَتْ عَلَيَّ الْأَرْضُ بِمَا رَحُبَتْ

Until, when the matter dragged on for me at length ... the earth became narrow for me despite all its vastness.

Source: Sahih al-Bukhari: 4418 · Authenticity: Sahih

My dear brother, my dear sister, if a Companion of that rank, a man loved by the Prophet ﷺ, could be brought to the very edge of ruin simply by saying *later*, then what about us, who say that word a dozen times before we have even finished breakfast? The cure for procrastination is spiritual medicine you can take today: seize the present moment, because the present is the only slice of time you are ever actually guaranteed to hold. The past is gone and cannot be edited. The future has not been promised and may never arrive. So the believer plants his feet firmly in the only place his power actually exists: the now.

BARAKAH, THE HIDDEN MULTIPLIER

Time Given to Allah Is Not Subtracted, It Is Multiplied

Now here is a secret that I want to make every one of us eager rather than anxious, hopeful rather than heavy. Many people resist giving time to worship because deep down they feel it is time *taken away* from

their real life, from their work, their rest, their goals. Let me correct this beautiful and important misunderstanding. Time given to Allah is not subtracted from your life. It is *multiplied* within it. This is the meaning of *barakah*, divine blessing, by which Allah expands a small amount of time so that it accomplishes what a large amount never could.

How often have you seen it, or lived it yourself? A person who guards his Fajr and opens his day with a portion of the Qur'an finds his whole day strangely fruitful, ordered, and light. Meanwhile another person who slept straight through the prayer wakes late and finds the entire day slipping uselessly through his fingers like sand, busy but blessed with nothing. The Prophet ﷺ specifically supplicated for his Ummah to be blessed in the early part of the day: *O Allah, bless my Ummah in its early mornings*. The one who gives Allah the first and best of his hours finds that Allah then places blessing in all the rest of them.

So do not imagine, my dear brother, my dear sister, that the twenty minutes you give to your prayer and your Qur'an are twenty minutes stolen from your success. They are the very thing that causes the remaining hours to flourish and bear fruit. This is a law of the unseen that the believer learns to trust: you cannot out-give Allah, not even with your time. Whatever you sacrifice for Him, He returns to you expanded, blessed, and multiplied, sometimes in this world and always in the next.

FILL IT WITH WHAT LASTS

What to Pour Into Your Reclaimed Hours

When a believer finally resolves to reclaim his time, the very next question is a wonderfully practical one: with what shall I actually fill it? And the answer is simple: fill it with everything that will still be standing on the Day the deeds are weighed. Let me be concrete, because vague intentions are how we ended up wasting time in the first place.

Anchor your entire day on the five daily prayers, for they are the timekeepers of the believer's life, dividing the day into measured portions and pulling your heart back to Allah at fixed hours no matter what you are doing. The person who masters the clock of the prayer has already learned to master his whole day. Then keep a daily appointment with the Qur'an, even if it is a single page read slowly with its meaning; across one year that single daily page becomes a genuine relationship with the Book of Allah. Keep your tongue moist with dhikr in the dead spaces of your day, the commute, the queue, the waiting room, the idle scroll, and watch those thrown-away minutes turn into treasure that piles up across a lifetime into literal years of reward.

And here we have to be brutally honest with ourselves about where our hours are truly going. The person who swears he has no time to read Qur'an, no time to seek knowledge, no time to sit with his children or visit his aging parents, will very often find, if he simply glances at the screen-time report on his own phone, that he handed hours of that same day to endless scrolling, to videos that left nothing behind, to a glowing rectangle that quietly devoured his entire evening and gave him nothing back. My dear brother, my dear sister, we do not actually lack time. We have simply prioritised other things above the things that matter. The believer is not commanded to throw his phone in the sea, but he is commanded to be the master of his hours and not their servant, to use the tool without being used by it, and to ask of every single hour: what will this be worth to me when it is written down and shown to me before Allah?

And do not despise the small, steady, unglamorous deed in favour of some grand gesture you know you cannot sustain past next Tuesday. The Prophet ﷺ taught us that the most beloved of deeds to Allah are the most constant, even if they are small. A small act repeated faithfully every single day across a lifetime outweighs a mountain of effort that you abandon after one enthusiastic week. The believer builds his eternal home the way a wall is built: one steady brick at a time, laid patiently in the very moments that everyone else throws away.

A REMINDER CARRIED HOME

It Is Never Too Late to Turn

And now, before you close this lesson, I refuse to let anyone leave crushed by the weight of the years he feels he has already wasted. Because here is the most beautiful truth about time in the entire religion: its value is not measured in how much of it has already passed, but in how you use what remains. And the door of return stays wide open for as long as there is breath moving in your chest.

A person may have squandered decades, entire decades, and then, in a single sincere turning back to Allah, redeem everything that is left and meet his Lord in the very best of states, because our deeds are judged by their endings. Do not let bitter regret over a wasted past steal from you the one precious thing you still hold in your hands right now, which is the present. But equally, do not walk away deceived into thinking there is plenty of runway ahead of you, because not one of us has been handed a guarantee of tomorrow. Walk the middle path, my dear brother, my dear sister, between despair over what is gone and false security about what is to come. And know that Allah has promised the most breathtaking reward to the one who governed his soul and his fleeting time for His sake:

وَأَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهِ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوَىٰ *
فَإِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَأْوَىٰ

*But as for the one who feared standing before his Lord and restrained his soul from base desire,
then indeed Paradise will be his refuge.*

Surah An-Nazi'at (79:40-41)

So begin now. Not tomorrow, not after Ramadan, not when things calm down, because things never truly calm down. Begin with the very next prayer. Begin with the very next hour, the one you are holding right now, the exact hour the dying man is begging to be sent back for. Turn it into profit while it is still in your hands, and let the best of your days be the last of them, and the best of your deeds be their endings.

☰ Your Action Plan: Guard Your Hours

Don't just read — choose what you will act on this week.

1 Guard your five prayers in their times

Set the adhan on your phone and treat each prayer as an unbreakable appointment. Let the salah divide and discipline your entire day.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

2 Take account of yourself every night

Before you sleep, spend five honest minutes asking: what did I do with the hours Allah gave me today? Weigh yourself before you are weighed.

EVERY NIGHT

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

3 Fill the dead spaces with what lasts

Replace one daily habit of mindless scrolling with dhikr, a page of Qur'an with its meaning, or a call to a parent or relative.

DAILY

Make it last: keep it daily until it becomes second nature — a habit for the rest of your life.

4 Check your screen-time report honestly

Open the report your phone already keeps, look at the number without flinching, and reclaim one wasted hour for something that will meet you before Allah.

THIS WEEK

Make it last: once this first week is done, don't stop — carry it on as a lifelong habit.

🚩 The 7-Day Reclaim Your Time Challenge

For seven days straight, pray Fajr on time and open your day with a single page of the Qur'an read slowly with its meaning, then end each night with five minutes of self-accounting. Do not aim for perfection or grand gestures; aim for the small, steady brick laid every single day. When the seven days are done, do not stop, because these were never meant to be a challenge but the first week of a habit that carries you all the way to the sunset of your life and beyond it into Paradise.

Make it stick – and make it last

- ✓ **Write it down.** Put your chosen action on a sticky note on your mirror, desk, or fridge – somewhere you cannot miss it.
- ✓ **Print this plan** and tick each action off as you do it.
- ✓ **Set a daily reminder** on your phone or calendar so it never slips your mind.
- ✓ **Keep a one-line journal** each night – did I do it today? how did it go? – and watch your streak grow.

Don't aim for one good day or week – aim to keep it for life. A habit only counts once it outlives the challenge.