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Audio & Video: *Live like you were Dying* – Sung by Tim McGraw

## Title: Live Like You We're Dying

Country music star Samuel Timothy McGraw was born on May 1, 1967. Though he didn't know it until years later, his father was baseball player Tug McGraw, a star relief pitcher for the Philadelphia Phillies and New York Mets...

Tim McGraw's country music career really began in 1990 when he signed his first record deal but took off in 1994 with the hit song: *Indian Outlaw*. After that – Tim's achievements are as remarkable as they numerous (listen to a brief summary):

9 albums,

Over 21 million albums sold

5 Multi-Platinum

23 #1 singles,

1994 winner of the top new country artist of the year award

*1996 married Faith Hill*

2001 winner of Country Music Association entertainer of the year

2001 winner of a Grammy award

2002 his NBC live concert special ranked higher than specials by (sorry Gary) U2 and Paul McCartney

2004 winner of the People's Choice Award - Favorite Male Musical performer

etc, etc, etc

For us this morning what's important is that in 2004 – his hit song *Live Like You Were Dying* stayed at the top of the charts for 10 consecutive weeks breaking a record which had stood for 30 years -- and as a result this song won him Billboard Charts country single of the year 2004.

In 2005 the same song won him another Grammy...  
AND he's coming to Calgary on July 16 to play to a sold out Saddledome...

The song, *Live Like You Were Dying* wasn't actually written by Tim McGraw but by Tim Nichols and Craig Wisemen – and they also wrote a little book with same name (a book I'll be using throughout this morning). Tim McGraw wrote the forward to this book – let me read it to you...

*A lot of people assume that I recorded this song because of the passing of my father, Tug McGraw. But my passion for this song goes a lot further.*

*I love this song because I believe that everyone who hears it will have their own unique reaction to it. Each person has his or her own definition of what it means to “live like you were dying.” That's what makes it such a great song. It's not just about my personal connection – although obviously there is one – it's about how you connect to it.*

*I hope this song can provide inspiration for all of us to stop and take time to appreciate all the blessings in our lives – from the smallest things to the biggest dreams... God Bless Tim McGraw*

With those words echoing in our ears let's give the song a listen...

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What does it mean to *Live like you were dying*?

It seems to me that at one level or another we all know that we're terminal – but not many of us expect death to happen... *say... today... or tomorrow... or anytime soon.* Especially when we're young – we don't expect to have to face death. We don't expect the end to be near, so it's hard for us to think about *living like were dying*.

But this song – and the stark black and white of the video – has become incredibly popular across North America. It's hit a cord. And it's caused all kinds of people to stop and think... To think about how they're living and why they're living the way they do.

But why? Why do you think this song had such a powerful effect? In other settings this would be a morbid topic. So why is it so popular?

Well, in my opinion – the truth of this song, the central point of this song – is so powerful and has effected so many people, not because it's so new – or so profound – *but because it articulates a truth which has been built into us by God.* It's a truth which God has built into this world – into who we are – into the way we are to live. It's a truth which has echoed down through history. And so it's a truth which, when we open ourselves to it, resonates in our souls. We know that we should live like were dying. We know it – and we've always known it.

James, who was a brother of Jesus, and lived about 2000 years ago, wrote about this in a letter. He said:

*I have a word to say for you who brashly announce, "Today – at the latest, tomorrow – we're off to such and such a city for the year. We're going to start a business and make a lot of money." You don't know the first thing about tomorrow. You're nothing but*

*a wisp of fog, catching a brief bit of sun before disappearing.  
Instead, make it a habit to say, "If the Master wills it and we're  
still alive, we'll do this and that."*

In other words – *live like you were dying.*

This text doesn't mean "don't prepare". It doesn't mean "don't plan". In fact, in it's context, it means "plan carefully" and "plan reflectively". Think about how you've been put together. Think about what it would take to be all that you can be. Think about what kind of effect your actions will have on others. Ask yourself if your plans actually fit God's plan – a greater plan – a plan designed for you.

Put another way; As you make your plans ask yourself: "If I had 3 months to live would my plans still make sense? Or are there things in life that I really want to do – maybe things I even know I should do – things that are really important to who I am" – Ask yourself: "Are there things like that which I've been putting off...?"

Tim Nichols and Craig Wisemen wrote:

*Live like you were dying.*

*It's simple. The best things always are. I hope it becomes your  
prayer, your motto, your mantra. I hope it becomes a part of you.*

*Every day.*

[After all] *WE'RE ALL TERMINAL.*

*Some of us are just lucky enough to know it.*

*Life is a spiritual journey. And sometimes all you have to do is show up  
and have a little faith that something completely amazing is possible any  
day.*

*And every now and then, right when you least expect it, something amazing does happen.*

*And you are no more in control than a feather is of the wind. All you know is that the force moving you is so strong that you just hang on in wonder.*

*There is nothing but the moment and the sense of dancing with angels. So ALIVE.*

I was in my early 20's when a moment came that stopped me on a dime. And I spent most of the next couple of *years* talking 'bout the options, talking 'bout sweet time.

The year was 1983. It was August and my wife, Monica, and I were doing what we loved to do the most. We were on a Motorcycle trip. In the previous years we'd traveled to Ontario and the mid-west of this USA. In August of 1983, we were on our way home from California. It was raining. The highway from Jasper to Edmonton was slick. But we weren't worried. We'd driven hundreds of miles in the rain... Our speed was around 100 kph when it happened. We hit a tar patch on the highway and before I could react the bike went down and we were sliding down the pavement.

Now I don't know if you've ever slid down a highway on your backside at 100 kph but let me tell you it isn't fun. We fell off the bike and slid across the oncoming lane of traffic.

Obviously, since I'm here to tell you about it, nothing was coming and no one hit us. The bike hit the ditch first and did flips in the air. Then we hit the ditch – we flipped and rolled a bunch of times – but survived without any major damage.

In a lot of ways that event was life changing – and when I think about it these days it's still life changing. It didn't cause me to go rocky mountain climbing, sky diving, or to ride a bull named Fumanchu – But it did set off a series of events which led me to read the good book with a lot more interest. And caused Monica and I to take a good long hard look at what we'd do if we could do it all again.

A couple of weeks after our accident we discovered that we were pregnant and that our daughter, Jennifer actually survived our accident with us...

Anyway, to make a long story shorter... that accident started a series of events – and a lot of reflection, which eventually led to me becoming a pastor – it eventually led me to this place – here today.

It led me to a place where I love deeper, forgive more easily, and don't worry as much as I once did about tomorrow. It led me to a place where I think I have a better understanding of what it means to “live like I'm dying”.

Now I don't think that you all need to go through something like the man in the song did – or like Monica and I did – in order to come to a place where you can better understand what it means to live this way... But I think it will help if you and I reflect a bit on a couple of key lines in the song...

The first has to do with forgiveness. I think that most of us – no matter how young or old we are – if we're honest with ourselves, we know that we can do a better job in this area. We can give forgiveness

that we've been denying. These days for me, as I reflect on how close I came to dying on the highway that day, I think about how much forgiveness I need – how much God must love me in order to send His son to die for the forgiveness of my sins. And that helps me to share forgiveness with others.

But perhaps you're not in that place – that place where the Jesus story makes sense to you. That's okay. The truth about sharing forgiveness still holds for you. Forgiving others will help you better understand life. It will make your life more complete. Just try it.

Here's what Tim & Craig wrote about that...

*Just let it go.*

*I know how long you've carried it around and how heavy it is.*

*Just let it go.*

*Deep down, you know it was just one of those things.*

*Just let it go.*

*You've had it so long, it's hard to imagine life without it.*

*Just let it go.*

*You know we weren't made to hang on to it.*

*Just let it go.*

*Right now. This moment. You've waited long enough.*

*Just let it go.*

*Take all of that forgiveness locked up deep inside you and*

*Just let it go.*

*And then you can give the forgiveness you've been denying.*

*Oh, yeah. Just one more thing.*

*Forgive yourself.*

The second key line from this song that I'd like you to think about this morning – has to do with Love. The man in the song began to love deeper... and the truth is, for Christians and non-Christians alike, love is one of the keys to life. In fact studies have actually shown that new born babies that aren't loved, aren't held and touched and cuddled and loved... don't develop properly – and in extreme cases will actually die.

And the Bible says that God is love. In fact in John 3:16 we read: *This is how much God loves the world: He gave His Son, His one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in Him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life.*

In a very real way it's love which makes the world go around. Again I like to suggest that you just try it. Spread some love and see if things don't change for the better. Just try it – tell people who are close to you, important to you – tell them that you love them. See what happens...

-You know when I first began to consider using this song on a Sunday morning I shared my idea – and the lyrics of the song – with a bunch of people. And I knew I was on to something when almost everyone I talked to launched into a story about what the song stirred in them. One person shared a story about how she learned to love deeper. This is her story as I remember it.

This lady lost her father when she was very young and as result she really doesn't remember much about who he was but she thinks of him as a very good and loving man. As the years went by, however, her mother remarried... and in her eyes her step-father simply didn't measure up. Today she admits that she didn't really give him a chance.



She wasn't very nice to him. She didn't share love with him and made it hard for him to love her. She did what she could to push him away...

Years later, after she moved out of the house, life taught her some lessons about the importance of love and, she realized what she'd done. But how could she fix things? What should she do to make up for lost time?

She decided to write her step-father a letter. In it she apologized for things she'd done and the way she'd acted. In it she explained that she did know that he loved her and she wrote: "I love you too" to her dad.

As you can imagine that letter changed their relationship – changed it for the better. And to this day, her mother tells her, he still takes that letter out once in a while, from that special place he keeps it, and he re-reads it. That letter has added an immeasurable amount of meaning to both their lives... Really all she did was share some love...

So what thoughts, what stories, which people, which situations does this song bring to your mind.

*May we live like we were dying.*

*With passion and purpose and mission and meaning...*

*And with a little wild abandon. With no forgiveness withheld and no anger held within.*

**MAY WE LIVE LIKE WE WERE DYING.**

*With a heart full of memories, precious and true, like a Bible that we can open anywhere and find ourselves and faith. With friends and*

*family and hugs and laughter and singing and praying and crying and holding hands and saying all the sappy stuff.*

*Then only then...MAY WE DIE LIKE WE WERE LIVING*

*Right now, you may be feeling something, hearing something, a call to action, a still small voice whispering, "YOU CAN DO IT."*

*You have everything you need already inside you. You have spirit that has never been tested, muscles you have never used. It's all there waiting...*

*MAY YOU LIVE LIKE YOU WERE DYING.*

### *Lyrics to the Song- Live Like You Were Dying*

He said I was in my early forties  
with a lot of life before me  
when a moment came that stopped me on a dime  
and I spent most of the next days  
looking at the x-rays  
Talking bout the options  
and talking bout sweet time  
I asked him when it sank in  
that this might really be the real end  
how's it hit you when you get that kinda news  
man what'd you do

and he said  
I went sky diving  
I went Rocky Mountain climbing  
I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named FuManchu  
and I loved deeper and I spoke sweeter  
and I gave forgiveness I'd been denying  
and he said someday I hope you get the chance  
to live like you were dying.

He said I was finally the husband  
that most the time I wasn't  
and I became a friend a friend would like to have  
and all the sudden going fishin  
wasn't such an imposition  
and I went three times that year I lost my dad  
well I finally read the good book  
and I took a good long hard look  
at what I'd do if I could do it all again

and then  
I went sky diving  
I went Rocky Mountain climbing  
I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named FuManchu  
and I loved deeper and I spoke sweeter  
and I gave forgiveness I'd been denying  
and he said someday I hope you get the chance  
to live like you were dying.

Like tomorrow was a gift and you got eternity to think about  
what'd you do with it what did you do with it

what did I do with it  
what would I do with it'

Sky diving

I went Rocky Mountain climbing

I went 2.7 seconds on a bull named FuManchu

and then I loved deeper and I spoke sweeter

and I watched an eagle as it was flying

and he said someday I hope you get the chance

to live like you were dying.

To live like you were dying

To live like you were dying

To live like you were dying

To live like you were dying