

WITH WHOM AND HOW DO I SPEND MY TIME?

We talk about killing time. We talk about wasting time. We talk about spending time. We talk about saving time. We talk about managing time. But time itself cannot be managed, killed, saved, or borrowed. No matter what we do, we cannot alter its flow. We cannot stop it. We cannot store it up. There is no hope of regaining what is spent.

Because we realize this, we covet it for ourselves. We tend to hoard it. We tend to be annoyed when people ask for it.

But, like everything else in life – we must ask ourselves. Whose time is it, really?

And what I call *my time* is really not mine at all. It is God's.

- He created it

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day. Gen 1:3-5 (NIV)

- He ordered it

To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven:... ...He has made everything beautiful in its time. Eccl 3:1,11 (NKJV)

- He finished it

And I know that whatever God does is final. Nothing can be added to it or taken from it. God's purpose is that people should fear him. What is happening now has happened before, and what will happen in the future has happened before, because God makes the same things happen over and over again. Eccl 3:14-15 (NLT)

- He controls it [Turns it back for Hezekiah (10 degrees) Isa 38:8]

Behold, I will bring the shadow on the sundial, which has gone down with the sun on the sundial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward." So the sun returned ten degrees on the dial by which it had gone down. Isaiah 38:8 (NKJV)

[Stops it for Joshua (about a whole day) Josh 10:13]
*So the sun stood still, And the moon stopped, Till the people had
revenge Upon their enemies. Is this not written in the Book of Jasher?
So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and did not hasten to go
down for about a whole day. Josh 10:13 (NKJV)*

All I get to do is live in it!

The greatest measure of my faith is what I do in it while it passes. I'm convinced that this is the most difficult of all tests of Time Management. How am I using the time that has been given to me?

In Hebrews 2 we read of a warning to pay attention to what God has done for our salvation and what He continues to do for us. The reason this is a warning to pay attention is that God wants us to spend time with Him. He has redeemed time for us.

What is redeemed time? Redeemed time means “*the payment of a price to recover from the power of another.*” God paid the payment of the price of Jesus' blood on Calvary's cross to recover us from the power of Satan. God has redeemed us, not with gold or silver, but with the holy, precious blood of Jesus and His innocent, suffering and death for our salvation.

With that redeemed time, we are given opportunities to serve God. Spending time with God in prayer, in worship, in the reading and studying of His Word, in reaching out to others to witness our faith, and in serving others out of love.

Each of us has the same amount of time. It is a commodity that we cannot save up nor regain. Here are the statistics:

- 60 seconds in a minute
- 60 minutes in an hour
- 24 hours in a day
- 7 days in a week (168 hours)
- 52 weeks in a year (8,736 hours)
- 0 – 110 years (960,960 possible hours)
- @ 50 you have spent 436,800 hours and counting...!

How are you spending your time? Our time on this earth is precious seconds that can be wasted or be beneficial for us and for others. All of us have wasted time. How can we redeem time?

First, we acknowledge the following:

- There is a God, and I'm not Him.
- God is the owner of all things.
- God let's me manage His things.
- This is reflected in my priorities.
- God wants me to manage more than I am managing now.

I redeem the time when I return ownership to God. I exchange *my time* for *His time*, and accept my role as manager, not owner.

What happens when I redeem the time?

- It becomes more productive

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV)

- I reclaim even what has been wasted

And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten... Joel 2:25 (NKJV)

I may not have more time – but it will be *like I have more*.

How do I redeem the time?

- Make sure the first and best is dedicated to God

Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, Before the difficult days come, And the years draw near when you say, "I have no pleasure in them":² While the sun and the light, The moon and the stars, Are not darkened...³ In the

day when the keepers of the house tremble... When the grinders cease because they are few... Eccl 12:1-4 (NKJV)

Example: Fill a large jar with fist-sized rocks. Is it full? No – put in some gravel. Is it full? No – put in some sand. Is it full? No – put in some water... The point? NOT that we can always make room for more... The point is that if we don't put the big things in first, we will never get them in.

This will result in *consistency*

- Trust Him with it

But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint. Isaiah 40:31 (NKJV)

Does it seem like there are too many things on your list? I know there are on mine. My wife can attest to this – I consider *sleep to be a necessary evil*. Sometimes I get so frustrated because I just can't keep going.

The real problem is that I have trouble trusting God with my time... I work 16 hours a day, and at times get frustrated about the other 8. When the truth of it is, I can't get my list done in 24 hours. God has to help me accomplish whatever I am to accomplish anyway, so I might as well quit worrying about it, and trust him to help me get it done in 8 or 10!

This will result in *rest*

- Ask Him to help you use it wisely

As with any aspect of Lifestyle Stewardship – understanding that my time is really God's will drastically affect the way I use it.

This will result in *productivity*

Some Tips for using time wisely:

- Make a plan

o In finance, we call it a budget

o In time management, we call it a schedule

To fail to plan is a plan to fail. If you don't plan your use of money, you will never have enough of it. The same goes for time – If you don't plan your use of time, you will never have enough.

Steps to making a schedule

- o Make a list of things you want to do
- o Prioritize the list (which are most important?)
- o Put the most important on the calendar
- Learn to say no

This is the key to success in managing – *anything*. Once you have a plan, there are going to be all kinds of requests for your time that aren't on it. Learn when to say “No”.

- Carry a notepad

When you think of something that you need to do or want to do, but are not sure if it is the thing to do right now – write it down. Don't trust your “to-do” list to your mind.

Some of you don't trust your mind, and so you stop what you are doing and do that thing right then. If the activity that you are already involved in is important, we call this a distraction.

But when you do trust your mind to hold onto that thought – there is a lot of mental energy expended just trying to hold it. This may not be bad for that one thought, but you most likely have many of these thoughts each day. It's like the difference between RAM and Disk space in your computer. The more you keep in RAM, the less is available for your computer to use in processing. When you write it down, you get it out of your mental RAM, freeing your mind to process other important things.

Here is the bottom line: Your priorities in life are revealed by how you spend your time. I'm just wondering how big of a priority God is?

We talk about *quality time*. But the adjective *quality* cannot substitute for the noun that it describes – *time*. The cold and hard truth is – our priorities in life are reflected most by the *quantity* and not the *quality* of time that we dedicate to it.

With whom are you spending your time? Certainly God wants us to spend time with Him. He also wants us to spend time with our family. Did you know that if you died tomorrow that the company you work for can replace you within days; but, your family will miss you for years? How many hours do we invest in our work over against the hours we invest in our family? If you take FAMILY as an acronym it says Father And Mother I Love You!

God loves us so much that He redeemed time for us. He's given us eternal time. How we spend our time on this earth and with whom may make a difference on how and with whom we spend our eternity.

The clock is ticking and as each second passes, has it been time well spent or wasted time?

Time is a gift from God. It is His and we are simply the managers of the time we are given. May that time be well-spent to the glory of God and for the well-being of others. AMEN.