

Using Time Wisely

Time is a gift from God: “This is the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it” (Ps. 118:24). Unfortunately, it is extraordinarily easy (as well as culturally acceptable) to waste vast quantities of time. Moreover, most people find it difficult to organize and budget their time wisely. Moses prayed: “So teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom” (Psalm 90:12). How might we as Christians make better use of the time God has given us?

Make a daily list – The business world has known for years that the most effective secret for increasing work productivity is the following: each morning, write down six items that need to be accomplished that day in order of priority and do them one at a time. The person who aims at nothing is certain to accomplish nothing. “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might” (Eccl. 9:10).

Group similar tasks together – E-mails, phone calls and text messages are rarely urgent, and yet when our smart phone “dings,” we tend to drop everything and answer it. Why not schedule specific times during the day as “response time” where you could answer all texts, calls and e-mails? Jesus sent the multitudes away and made Himself unavailable to people at times; what causes us to think that it is spiritually healthy for people to have access to us 24/7 (cf. Mark 1:35; 6:45-46)?

Give priority to a deep relationship with God – The most important part of our lives is the part that nobody but God sees. Are you spending private time with Him in prayer and worship (Mark 1:35; Matt. 6:6)? Are you regularly feeding on His word (Matt. 4:4; Job 23:12)? Are you developing the Fruit of the Spirit in your life (Gal. 5:22-23)? Far too few people spend time growing a great soul! Is your soul prospering (3 John 2)? If not, your time is not being spent wisely enough (cf. Luke 12:20-21; Matt. 6:33).

Ruthlessly eliminate time wasters – Jesus said, “If your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell” (Matt. 5:30). The devil wins when we allow laziness to take over our lives: “He who is slothful in his work is brother to him who is a great destroyer” (Prov. 18:9). While there IS a need for rest and relaxation, it is possible for us to become enslaved to our diversions.

Plant seeds thoughtfully – Paul wrote: “Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7). Not every activity or investment pays immediate dividends. However, a wise person will think about future harvests and plant seeds accordingly. What kinds of seeds are you planting now so that there will be a blessed harvest in your future?

Emphasize loving family relationships – The light that shines farthest, shines brightest at home. Families need each other, especially in this brutal and unforgiving world. Have you ever stopped to calculate the time that must be invested to fulfill God’s

commands in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and Ephesians 5:22-6:4? Christ-centered homes do not happen by accident. Both quality and quantity time invested in our families for the sake of Jesus Christ is never wasted.

May God help us to remember how short our time is (Ps. 89:47; Job 7:6) and to live and invest accordingly. **-- JB**