

Time and Eternity

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Introduction:

"Lord, ... even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God. ... For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by" (**Psalm 90:1-4**). Moses' only recorded psalm describes a fundamental difference between man and God. God is from everlasting to everlasting. Time is meaningless to Him. He can accomplish what He wills in "His time." Not so for us. Moses describes us in **Psalm 90:10**, "As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty years, yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away." Moses' conclusion is straightforward in **vs. 12**, "Teach us to number our days." How can we accomplish this? Picture your entire life as the face of a clock going from noon to midnight. If we use Moses' generous figure of 80 years, every 10 years equals an hour and a half. 10 year olds are at 1:30. 20 year olds are at 3:00 and have lived 25% of their lives. 30 year olds are at 4:30. 40 year olds are at 6:00 and half of the day is gone. 50 year olds are at 7:30. 60 year olds are at 9:00 and 75% of the day has been used. 70 year olds are living at 10:30 and it is nearly bedtime. 80 year olds are at midnight. Where are you on the clock? I am at 4:30. How much time do you have left? Why is numbering our days so important? After we reach midnight, we will face God in judgment (**Hebrews 9:27**). If our time has been frittered away in eternally meaningless things, our destiny will be eternal destruction. We must not let our time slip through our hands unmanaged. Instead, we must redeem the time (**Ephesians 5:16**). Time management, for Christians, is not an issue of job effectiveness or working productivity. It is an issue of salvation. Time and eternity go hand in hand. As we begin a new year, let us examine the top ten biblical principles of Christian time management.

Discussion:

- I. Make God's will your guide.
 - A. **Ephesians 5:17** modifies the command to redeem the time by directing us to understand God's will. It is our number one key. Before disciplining, prioritizing or scheduling, we must learn God's will. It will guide us in every other aspect of managing our time.
 - B. This automatically implies something about our schedule. We must schedule time to learn God's will. A good example to follow is that of the Bereans who searched the scriptures daily (**Acts 17:11**).
- II. Acquire wisdom.
 - A. One of the most amazing things I have learned as I have studied the Bible is that God has given us the freedom to act foolishly. Behaving foolishly will not always condemn our souls, but it will always harm our lives. If we will redeem our time, we must get wisdom. Read **Proverbs 1:20-33; 3:13-26**. Wisdom will increase our life and help us to walk in security and confidence. Folly robs us of time and fills us with fear.
 - B. As **Proverbs 13:20** advises, we must spend time with the wise. A good place to begin is to spend time with those who are older than you. Listen to their stories and their advice, you will learn something.
- III. Negate sin from your life.
 - A. The greatest waste of our time is sin. It not only wastes the moment, but also robs us of eternity.
 - B. Consider the example of Moses in **Hebrews 11:24-25**. By the world's standards he would have been an effective time manager had he spent his time being successful in Pharaoh's house. But, he was a much greater time manager because he chose God's path and avoided the sin.
- IV. Allow eternity to determine how you use your time.
 - A. **Hebrews 11:26** explains why Moses made such a good choice to overcome sin. He knew that how he used his time would determine his eternity, so he allowed eternity to determine how he used his time.
 - B. When you stand before God in judgment, what do you think you will wish you spent more time doing? I imagine that most of us will be wishing we had spent more time getting ourselves prepared and helping our family and friends prepare for judgment.
 - C. This point is not just about scheduling time to pray, study and worship. It means that everything we do must be based on where we want to spend eternity. My job should not be a means to acquire stuff, but rather a means to serve and obey God [**Ephesians 6:5-6; I Timothy 5:8**], preparing me for judgment.
- V. Go after worthy things.
 - A. **Proverbs 12:11** says we must not pursue worthless things. We have already learned that we only have so much time, we cannot go after everything. We must consider the value of all the things we can pursue and go after only those of real, lasting worth. To do this properly, our value system must be based on eternity (**Matthew 6:19-21**). No doubt, in this world there are many "valuable" things: houses, cars, computers, furniture, jewelry, etc. But, all of these will be burned up in the end (**II Peter 3:10**).

- B. This does not mean having earthly “treasures” is wrong. **Matthew 6:33** says that when we pursue the one thing of greatest value, other things will be added. The point is we must keep the value of things in perspective. Don’t waste the time you should be investing in eternity, by spending it on the world.

VI. Eliminate idleness.

- A. Solomon describes the ant in **Proverbs 6:6-11**. He describes an excellent wife saying, “She does not eat the bread of idleness” (**Proverbs 31:27**). Next to sin, idleness is the biggest time waster. It must be eliminated. A machine is idling when it is operating “without doing useful work, usually at minimum speed” (Webster’s Dictionary). Use your time. Don’t fritter it away without doing anything useful.
- B. Do not mistake rest and relaxation for idleness. God demonstrated the importance of rest in **Psalms 23** when He explained that He makes us lie down in green pastures. Some time must be used to “recharge our batteries.” But we must be careful that we do not allow relaxation to take control of our time. When rest is no longer about regaining strength, idleness sets in. Sleep, television, video games, surfing the internet and other activities may all provide time to recharge, but do not let these take control.

VII. Make preparations not procrastinations.

- A. **Proverbs 10:5** contrasts a good son with a foolish one. This proverb is not about farming. It is about using time. The foolish can come up with many reasons why gathering can be done later. When winter comes, there is no food. Amazingly, this person will then beg for help and claim they didn’t have time.
- B. Procrastinating is the credit card of time. We are borrowing bits of time from our future. That is, we are committing time in our future to do what we ought to be doing now. Eventually the interest will become more than we can bear. Business have failed, marriages crumbled and souls have been lost all because the foolish procrastinate doing the important things for which they think they will have time later. The final comments of each of these is, “I always meant to _____, but I just never had time.”

VIII. Eliminate materialism.

- A. We live in a materialistic society. A great deal of our time is used thinking about, looking for, planning around and spending money. But **Proverbs 23:4-5** says, “Do not weary yourself to gain wealth.” When materialism drives our lives, we are wasting our time and our eternity.
- B. TV’s, DVD’s, CD players, computers, cars, nice homes, fancy furniture and big bank accounts are all nice to have. If God has blessed you with material goods as you have invested your time to glorify and serve Him, then I am very happy for you. But if you have these things because money is what drives you, then your time has been an eternal waste. You cannot take any of those things with you when you go to judgment (**II Timothy 6:7**). On that day, do you think you will care about any of these material things?

IX. Never let pleasure become your guide.

- A. **Proverbs 21:17** teaches we should not love pleasure. When I was a teenager, Cyndi Lauper sang “Girls Just Wan’na Have Fun.” It seems that is the anthem for many today, male and female alike. They make their decisions based on what appears to be more personally pleasurable. If adultery is more fun than faithfulness, they will commit adultery. If drinking provides more pleasure than sobriety, they will drink. If spending money is more fun than saving, they run up credit cards. If playing baseball, basketball, soccer or golf is more fun than attending worship, they will forsake the assembly.
- B. There is a place for pleasure and enjoyment. God wants us to enjoy the blessings He has given us (**Ecclesiastes 9:7-9**). He wants us to have fun. But we must keep pleasure in proper perspective. Pleasure is to be a happy byproduct of doing right, not the guide by which we live our lives.

X. Take no substitute for excellence.

- A. This final key modifies every other principle we have discussed. After you have considered these principles and determined how you will use your time, follow the advice of the preacher in **Ecclesiastes 9:10**. “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.” You may be doing all the right things and none of the wrong, but if you are only doing them half-heartedly, then you are not redeeming your time.
- B. **Proverbs 22:29** says, “Do you see a man who excels in his work? He will stand before kings.” Do not take any substitutes. Do not settle for mediocrity or good enough. Strive for excellence in all that you do.

Conclusion:

I must admit, most of these principles are more easily taught than practiced. But by God’s grace, if we devote ourselves to God and His glory, we can and will redeem the time by following these principles. Our souls depend on it. Benjamin Franklin once said, “Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time, for that’s the stuff life is made of.” The Christian should take it a step further saying, “Dost thou love eternal life? Then do not squander time, for that’s the stuff that makes your eternity.” What does your time say about your eternity?