

Spiritual Discipline: Stewardship of Time

September 2015

Think for a moment: What events produced the greatest stress in your life today? This past week? Have you felt overloaded with responsibilities at home, work, school, church, or all of the above? Are you always running late to appointments? Are you struggling through each day on too little rest? With all our modern conveniences and technological advances we should have more leisure time than any period in history, but the opposite is really the case. Time is a resource and as stewards of all our God-given resources, we should not waste any of the time we're given.

Godliness is the result of a biblically disciplined spiritual life. But at the heart of a disciplined spiritual life is the disciplined use of time. Jesus' approach to life is a great model for us. He was clearly focused on the mission set before Him. He was a public figure, followed by adoring crowds and hounded by religious leaders. He had a keen sense of timing as it related to His purpose here on Earth. And yet, Jesus intentionally spent time praying to His Father, pouring His life into His disciples and building relationships with sinners. Jesus exhibited an "unhurried presence" as He lived His life with purpose. As followers of Christ, our unhurried, purposeful lives can be a powerful witness of the peace and joy we have received from Him.

Biblical Thoughts on Time:

1. Use Time Wisely – Ephesians 5:15-16

In this passage, Paul encourages believers to examine their lives and wisely make the best use of the time they are given. He also provides the reason for doing this – "because the days are evil." We know that our thoughts and our bodies must be controlled or they will drift toward evil influences. Our use of discretionary time can be influenced as well. The wise use of our minutes, will result in the wise use of our days, weeks, months and years.

2. Time is Short – James 4:14

The more scarce something is the more valuable it is. So, time would not be so precious if we never died. But since we always live one breath away from eternity, the way we use our time has eternal significance. When you consider that an entire decade is only 120 months, huge chunks of our lives suddenly seem short.

3. We are Accountable to God for the Time We Have – Romans 14:12

The wise response to this truth is to evaluate your use of time now and spend it in a way that you will not regret at the Judgment. Each hour that passes is another for which we must give an account. This realization causes us to reflect on how we are investing the time we have in the key relationships around us. How will our family and friends be influenced by the time we spend with them? Will their faith be stronger and their lives enriched?

Throughout the month of September, live out the spiritual discipline of time stewardship by working through the items below and discussing them with your 222 Group.

- Evaluate your use of time in each of the following areas and ask yourself if you are spending your time in each as God would have it (remembering that there are extremes on both sides – spending too much or too little time in these areas): family, work, church, work in and around your home, media, sports, the Lord's Day, hobbies, exercise, sleep, Bible intake, prayer, and physical preparation for the day.
- Reflecting on the results of the previous activity: Are there any sore spots in any of these areas? If so, could it be the Lord's nudge about a needed change?
- Go to ministrygrid.com and in the "Have a Membership Code?" field type in the following code: **14BDMI**. If this is your first time using Ministry Grid, you will be asked to create a free profile. View Sessions 1-3 of the Simple Life video series (You will be asked to view Sessions 4-6 next month) and discuss new insights with your 222 Group.
- In light of what you've learned in the Simple Life videos, take some time to write a brief mission statement for your life and identify at least one area of "congestion" in your life that needs to be addressed in order for you to become a better steward of the time you've been given.