

Generosity – Time

“Time is an equal opportunity employer. Each human being has the exactly same number of hours and minutes each day. Rich people can’t buy more hours. Scientist can’t invent new minutes. And you can’t save time to spend it on another day. Even so, time is amazingly fair and forgiving. No matter how much time you’ve wasted in the past, you still have an entire tomorrow. Success depends upon using it wisely – by planning and setting priorities. The fact is time is worth more than money, and by killing time, we are killing our own chances for success.”

-- Denis Waitley

Let's look first at God's Generosity

We have all been given time – it is a precious and usually generous gift from God

168 per week 8736 Per year 436,800 hours to spend waste or invest from the time we are 20 till we are 70

174,720 hours till we are 20

How do you think we have done so far

It is important that we build in margin - Margin - an amount allowed or available beyond what is actually necessary: *to allow a margin for error.*

Margin is the space between your current performance and your limits. When you reach the limit of your resources, strength, capacity or self-control, you have no margin. And without margin, you have no room for error. The consequences of margin-less living are most apparent in our relationships. Love, intimacy, and friendship happen in the unstructured, unhurried world of margin. When we attempt to squeeze one more thing in, we inadvertently squeeze one more person out.

In our attempt to get the most out of life, our lives and schedules spin out of control. Our time is limited, and someone always determines how our time is spent. When we surrender our time to the Creator, He will lead us to margin. By creating margin, we recognize that our days are numbered by God, we have to prioritize accordingly, and time alone with God must be a priority.

Psalms 39:4-7 (NLT)

³ My thoughts grew hot within me and began to burn, igniting a fire of words:

⁴ "LORD, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered, and that my life is fleeing away.

⁵ My life is no longer than the width of my hand. An entire lifetime is just a moment to you;

Interlude

human existence is but a breath."

⁶ We are merely moving shadows, and all our busy rushing ends in nothing. We heap up wealth for someone else to spend.

The final verse I read of Psalm 39 was;

⁷ And so, Lord, where do I put my hope? My only hope is in you

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NKJV) See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:15-16 (Amplified) Look carefully then how you walk! Live purposefully and worthily and accurately, not as the unwise and witless, but as wise (sensible, intelligent people), ¹⁶Making the very most of the time [buying up each opportunity], because the days are evil.

Ephesians 5:15-16 (NLT) So be careful how you live, not as fools but as those who are wise. ¹⁶Make the most of every opportunity for doing good in these evil days.

Philosopher William James affirmed that the great use of one's life is to spend it for something that will outlast it, for the value of life is computed not by its duration but by its donation. Not how long we live but how fully and how well.

The problem is not that of needing more time but making better use of the time we have. Let us face the fact squarely that each of us has as much time as anyone else in the world. Others may have more ability, influence, or money than we, but they have no more time.

General Eisenhower is quoted as saying, "The urgent is seldom important, and the important is seldom urgent." Too often life is controlled by the "tyranny of the urgent". We put aside higher and more worthy goals to put out fires.

Let's evaluate the importance of all of our daily activities to be sure we're not victims of the "Tyranny of the Urgent".

Time can be lost, but it can never be retrieved. It cannot be hoarded; it must be spent. Nor can it be postponed. If it is not used productively, it is irretrievably lost.

We must redeem the time, buy up each opportunity afforded us to work for the Lord.

NIV - "making the most of every opportunity!"

It is to buy up, like buyers on the watch for a favorable market time, it implies the preciousness of the opportune season.

When Paul urged the Ephesian Christians to "redeem the time," he was indicating that in a sense time becomes ours by purchase. There is a price to be paid for its highest employment. We exchange time in the market of life for certain occupations and activities that may be either worthy or unproductive. Weymoth renders this sentence thus: "Buy up the opportunities," for time is opportunity, and herein lies the importance of a carefully planned life. "If we progress in the economy of time, we are learning to live. If we fail here we fail everywhere."

Leonard Ravenhill stated: "The opportunity of a lifetime must be seized within the lifetime of the opportunity!"

Dale Carnegie told the story of two men who were out chopping wood. One man worked hard all day, took no breaks, and stopped only briefly for lunch. The other chopper took several breaks during the day and a short nap at lunch. At the end of the day, the woodman who had taken no breaks was quite disturbed to see that the other chopper had cut more wood than he had.

He said, "I don't understand. Every time I looked around, you were sitting down, yet you cut more wood than I did."

His companion replied, "Did you also notice that while I was sitting down I was sharpening was sharpening my ax?"

Psalm 90:12 (NKJV) So teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

If we are meticulously careful to take care of the days the years will take care of themselves.

It begins with a concern with the minutes and hours of our lives.

Throughout the New Testament Jesus' overriding concern was to fulfill the work committed to Him within the allotted hours.

He found the twenty-four hours of the day sufficient to complete the whole will of God.

I like what William James wrote:

"Everyone knows on any given day that there are energies slumbering in him which the incitements of that day do not call forth.... Compared with what we ought to be, we are only half awake. Our fires are damped, our drafts are checked. We are making use of only a small part of our possible mental and physical resources.... Stating the thing broadly, the human individual thus lives far within his limits; he possesses powers of various sorts he habitually fails to use."

Isn't that the truth! Alleged "impossibilities" are opportunities for our capacities to be stretched.

An incident from the American Revolution illustrates what tragedy can result from procrastination. It is reported that Colonel Rahl, commander of the British troops at Trenton, New Jersey, was playing cards when a courier brought an urgent message stating that General George Washington was crossing the Delaware River. Rahl put the letter in his pocket and didn't bother to read it until the game finished. Then, realizing the seriousness of the situation, he hurriedly tried to rally his men to meet the coming attack, but his procrastination was his undoing. He and many of his men were killed, and the rest of the regiment were captured.

Nolbert Quayle said, "Only a few minutes' delay cost him his life, his honor, and the liberty of his soldiers. Earth's history is strewn with the wrecks of half-finished plans and unexecuted resolutions. "Tomorrow' is the excuse of the lazy and the refuge of the incompetent."

Since every day is a gift from God, I live each one enthusiastically for Him.

Dawson Trotman, the founder and first president of The Navigators, once said, "The greatest time wasted is the time getting started."

Leisure hours constitute a glorious opportunity or a subtle danger. Each moment of the day is a gift from God and should be conserved with prudent care, for time is life measured out to us for work. ... Our hours and days will keep on being used up, but they can be used purposefully and productively.

Jesus... did not finish all the urgent tasks in Palestine or all the things He would have liked to do, but He did finish the work which God gave Him to do. The only alternative to frustration is to be sure that we are doing what God wants. Nothing substitutes for knowing that this day, this hour, in this place, we are doing the will of the Father. Then and only then can we think of all the other unfinished tasks with serenity, and leave them with God.

Often the pressures that keep us from being effective stewards of our time are the result of having assumed responsibilities not assigned to us by God and therefore we cannot expect God to give us the extra strength and grace required.

My stories bus and the building

The strength of moral character is derived and conserved by the refusing of the unimportant.

The question then is what is most important

This all fits into the Apostle Paul's affirmation that God has a plan for every life, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10 NKJV) Through daily prayer and communion with God through His Word, "our personal relationship" with Him, we must discover the details of that plan and arrange our time accordingly.

John 9:4 (NLT) We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work.

We must redeem the time, buy up each opportunity afforded us to work for the Lord. We are exchanging the precious time that has been generously given to us by God in the market place of life.

This is the beginning of a new day.

God has given me this day to use as I will. I can waste it or – use it for good, but what I do today is important, because I am exchanging a day of my life for it!

When tomorrow comes, this day will be gone forever, leaving in its place something that I have traded for it.

***I want it to be gain,
And not loss;
Good, and not evil;
Success and not failure;
In order that I shall not regret
The price that I have paid for it.***

– Dr. Hartsill Wilson.