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Giving to God

Time and how we use it

Earlier in our discussions we determined that there are many things which we can give to God. Good stewardship begins with a proper relationship with God and our giving of ourselves without reservation to Christ. It proceeds with the yielding of our various skills, abilities and gifts for service to Him. Each of us has something to give and we should be excited about the prospect of service.

Although our skills and abilities may differ, there is one area in which we are all equal in what we can give - time. Each one of us has exactly the same amount of time. There are 1,440 minutes in a day and 168 hours in a week. We each have 52 weeks to get life done! No one has any more or less time than anyone else. The only difference we make is in how we use it.

Eph 5:15-17

Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Ps 39:4-5

Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each man's life is but a breath.

Ps 90:12

Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Ecc 3:1-11

3 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: 2 a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, 3 a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, 4 a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, 5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain, 6 a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away, 7 a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,

8 a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.

9 What does the worker gain from his toil? 10 I have seen the burden God has laid on men. 11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

1. The average person will live 70 years on this earth. See if you can rank the following in order of amount of time spent on each task.

_____ Church

_____ Working

_____ Traveling

_____ Eating

_____ Sick

_____ Getting Dressed

_____ Sleeping

_____ Playing

Here is how the breakdown of our time works out – if we assume each person has 70 years to live:

23 years are spent sleeping, 19 years working, 9 years playing, 6 years traveling/commuting, 6 years eating, 4 years being sick, 2 years getting dressed, and one year in church. 1/70th of our time is spent w/God. It is important to realize that time, unlike money, cannot be saved, but only spent. How we spend our time is of critical importance.

2. Take a moment to review the verse in Eph 5. Just like a clock has an hour hand, minute hand and second hand, Paul in this verse has three things which believers must do to manage time properly. What three things does Paul want us to do?

Paul begins with “be careful how you live your life” – how we conduct our lives and spend our time. (this is like the hour hand) We waste a tremendous amount of time and often hear people say I don’t have enough time. Think about the biggest time wasters you have – TV, Computer, day dreaming, lack of planning, family, friends, lack of self discipline – we need to confront those. Paul tells us to make the most of each opportunity (the minute hand) Think about Jesus’ life – his ministry was a short 3 years, how did he do it. He never got in a hurry, but did only those things which were necessary The second hand is all about who controls things – is God’s will going to win out, or our own. If we let God chart our course then we will not waste our time on foolish pursuits.

3. Paul desires that we take advantage of our time on earth, for life passes quickly. What are some things we learn from Ps 39:4-5 which can help us in managing our time and resources?

What is God’s perspective on our time on earth? Do we have the same attitude?

4. Take a moment to read Ps 90:12 and think about using time wisely. What would using time wisely mean in light of this verse?

What are the biggest threats to using our time wisely?

5. We know that God has given each of us the same amount of time, yet we can be frustrated by our own lack of accomplishments. Paul reminds us in Eph to not be foolish in how we live. What kind of perspective does Ecc 3:1-8 provide?

Our world struggles with completing tasks, with making sure everything gets done. The result is often a frustration with ourselves and others because “things” aren’t done. What can we learn from these verses?

6. We seldom understand any more than just a small amount of God's plan for our lives, and often are puzzled by the direction of our lives. We are frustrated sometimes by how slowly things happen. How does Ecc 9-11 help us?

There is no reason to panic over our "to do" list, or to waste time by failing to focus. If we apply God's perspective to time and focus on being good stewards of each day, we will complete our God given tasks. This verse can help us relax and allow God's timing to unfold!

7. What are some things we can do to make better use of our time and become better stewards of days God has allotted for us?

In a typical week we will sleep 56 hours, eat and dress for 20 hours, work for 40 hours and travel for 8 hours. That leaves 44 hours for other things. Ask yourself where you are currently spending your time. Are you focused on the right things? What could you accomplish for God if some changes were made?