

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, 10-6-13 AM NOTES
"MANAGING YOUR ALLOTTED TIME"
EPHESIANS 5:15-17
#5 in Series, "Managing Your Life"

Psalms 39:4-5 (HCSB) "4 Lord, reveal to me the end of my life and the number of my days. Let me know how transitory I am. 5 You, indeed, have made my days short in length, and my life span as nothing in Your sight. Yes, every mortal man is only a vapor."

James 4:14 (NKJV) "whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away."

Psalms 90:12 (NKJV) "So teach *us* to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

1 Peter 1:17 (NASB) "...the time of your stay *on earth*."

I. Biblical Principles for Managing Our Allotted Time (Ephesians 5:15-17)

A. We Must Manage Our Allotted Time With Care (v. 15)

Psalms 14:1a (NKJV) "The fool has said in his heart, '*There is no God*.'"

Romans 1:21-22 (NKJV) "21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools."

1 Corinthians 1:30a (NKJV) "But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God..."

Isaiah 11:2b (NKJV) "...the Spirit of wisdom and understanding..."

B. We Must Manage Our Allotted Time With Urgency (v. 16)

Missionaries Jim Elliot, William Borden, David Brainerd, and the great Scottish pastor Robert Murray McCheyne all died before their 30th birthday.

John 17:4 (NKJV) "I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do."

C. We Must Manage Our Allotted Time With Understanding (v. 17)

Ephesians 5:10 (ESV) "and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord."

Romans 12:2 (NKJV) "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."

Psalms 37:4 (NKJV) "Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart."

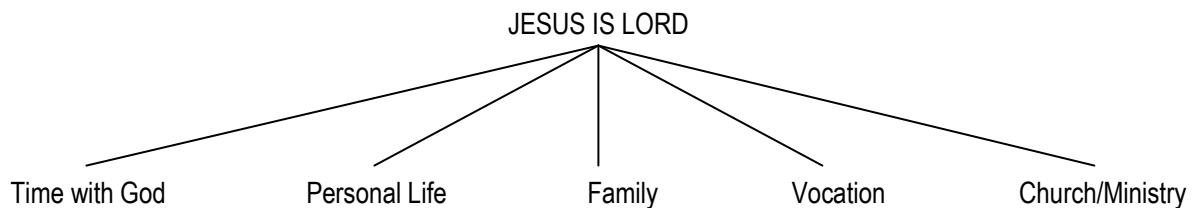
II. The Practical Application of the Biblical Principles

A. We Must Have a Biblical View of Life

The “two level” view of life sees all of life divided up into two categories: the secular and the sacred.

The biblical view of life is that everything is spiritual in the sense that it is important to God.

B. We Must Have a Balanced View of Life



Time with God—Daily quiet time, reading edifying Christian books, personal Bible studies

Personal Life—Exercise, rest, hobby, healthy habits

Family—Leading family, teaching formally and informally, fun times, marriage strengtheners

Vocation—Reasonable time doing the work, performance improvement, seasonal long hours

Church/Ministry—Connecting, growing, serving, sharing

C. We Must Have a Prayed-Through, Written-Out Plan

Set objectives, goals, and make action plans

Joel 2:25a (NKJV) “So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten...”

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My only sibling was a brother that was 2 years younger than me. He was 41 years old, six feet tall and about 170 pounds. He had a physical about 2 weeks prior and all seemed to be OK. His blood pressure and cholesterol were in the “acceptable” range. There was no significant history of heart disease in our family. On November 7, 1993 while his family was out of town, he suffered a fatal heart attack. A friend found him when he didn’t show up where he was supposed to be. **Psalms 39:4-5 (HCSB)** ⁴“Lord, reveal to me the end of my life and the number of my days. Let me know how transitory I am. ⁵ You, indeed, have made my days short in length, and my life span as nothing in Your sight. Yes, every mortal man is only a vapor.” **James 4:14 (NKJV)** “whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.” Because our time here on earth is like a vapor, we are told in **Psalms 90:12 (NKJV)** “So teach *us* to number our days, that we

may gain a heart of wisdom.” The phrase “number our days” means to count them out as we would treasured gems of great value. It is in doing this that we present to God “a heart of wisdom”. This is why the stewardship of time is so important. Let’s review. The basic truth of stewardship is that God is the owner of everything, and we are stewards or managers of what He gives to us to control. One day every person is going to give an account as to how he managed God’s resources. Everything belongs to God by right of creation. That is not only true of money and the things that money can buy; it is also true of time. God created the time dimension. All time belongs to Him and to each of us He has allotted a maximum number of days. **1 Peter 1:17b (NASB)** calls our days here on earth, “... the time of **your stay** on earth”. While we may shorten that time by foolish living and sin, we can do nothing to lengthen those days He has determined. Time is different from money in that it is a non-renewable trust. Once time is spent, it is gone forever. It can never be recovered. As we get older, we become more aware of how fleeting time is. There is an inscription on an old clock in the Chester Cathedral that says:

When I was a child, I laughed and wept; time crept.

When I was a youth I dreamed and talked; time walked.

When I became a full grown man; time ran.

And later as older I grew; time flew.

Soon I shall find, while traveling on, time gone.

If you would manage your life, you must manage your time.

I. Biblical Principles for Managing Our Allotted Time (Ephesians 5:15-17)

When it comes to the stewardship of time, we do not turn first to books of man; we turn to the Word of God. There is much in Scripture about the wise use of time.

A. We Must Manage Our Allotted Time with Care (V15)

In Ephesians 5, “walk” is a key word. Your walk is your pattern of life. There are two ways of walking: We can walk as a wise person or as a fool. To be classified as a fool has nothing to do with one’s IQ. A fool is simply a person who leaves God out of his life. **Psalms 14:1a (NKJV)** says “The fool has said in his heart, ‘*There is no God.*’” That literally says, “A fool has said in his heart, ‘No, God!’” The fool may give mental assent to God or deny that He exists. What makes them a fool is that they walk through life saying “no” to God’s truth and God’s commands. We see an extended description of a fool in Romans 1. We see in Romans 1:18-20 that the fool suppresses or holds down the truth of God’s existence and power that is evident in His creation. They just refuse to acknowledge it. As a result we read in **Romans 1:21-22 (NKJV)** “²¹ because, although they knew God, they did not glorify *Him* as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²² Professing to be wise, they became fools”. We are not to walk as fools, but as wise. What is a wise person? One way to look at it is that a wise person is the opposite of a fool. In other words, a wise person acknowledges God’s existence, God’s truth, and God’s claim on their life. A fool says in his heart, “no, God!” A wise person says in his heart, “Yes, God”. According to the Scriptures, every true Christian has access to wisdom. **1 Corinthians 1:30a (NKJV)** “But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God...” **Colossians 2:3 (NKJV)** “in whom [Jesus] are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” We who are in Christ have wisdom; we must walk in that wisdom as we abide in Christ who is the wisdom of God. We are to walk filled with the Spirit of Christ who **Isaiah 11:2b** says is “the Spirit of wisdom and understanding”.

How does a wise person walk? He walks “circumspectly”. The word “circumspectly” has the idea of precision and accuracy. It is translated “careful” or “carefully” in most translations. It is the idea of exact or accurate. One man paraphrased it, “walk like you are walking through a mine field”. We are not to drift through life based on our immediate circumstances, impulses, desires, or the demand of others who have their own agenda’s for us. When we do, we waste the time God has given us and act like a fool. We are to walk in wisdom, with precision, circumspectly, carefully, planning the time, and utilizing every moment for the accomplishment of God’s plans and the completion of our mission in the short allotment of time we have on planet earth. We must manage our allotted time with care.

B. We Must Manage Our Allotted Time with Urgency (V16)

The key to understanding a biblical approach to the use of time is that word “redeeming”. It means to urgently buy something that is a great bargain in the marketplace before it is too late. The word for “time” used here means an allocated period of time. We have been given by God an allocated period of time here on planet earth and we are to urgently buy up every opportunity to glorify God and accomplish the work He has created us to do in that allotted time. We must carefully analyze our use of the allotted time God has given us. Are we using it to accomplish that which has eternal significance or that which has no eternal significance? The 16th century reformer Philipp Melanchthon kept a record of every wasted moment and then took his list to God in confession and repentance at the end of each day. It is no surprise that God used him such amazing ways. Someone who is truly redeeming the time is normally not going at a frenetic pace with no time for the needs of people. Someone redeeming the time realizes that we are not wasting time when we rest or do activities that refresh us, but there is a sense of urgency about accomplishing the tasks we have been put here to do. As you read the Gospels you don’t find Jesus running at a frenetic pace with no time for people. He knew His purpose, knew where He was going, and had an eternal perspective that elevated the needs of people above some schedule imposed on Him by man.

Redeeming the time really has nothing to do with the amount of time God has allotted to us. Some of the men and women most mightily used by God lived relatively short lives here on earth. Missionaries Jim Elliot, William Borden, David Brainerd, and the great Scottish Pastor Robert Murray McCheyne all died before their 30th birthday. Jonathan Edwards and Charles Spurgeon both died in their 50’s. Jesus died at 33 and could say to the Father in **John 17:4 (NKJV)** “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” We must aggressively redeem God’s time. A Christian should never say, “I don’t have the time” when it refers to something that God has told us to do. Aggressively find the time by trimming away time wasters that have no eternal value.

C. We Must Manage Our Allotted Time with Understanding (V17)

It is to accomplish “the will of the Lord” that we redeem time. The will of the Lord focuses primarily on what God has already revealed in His word. The word “understand” means to put together. It is like putting the pieces of a puzzle together to see the whole picture. We are to put together the will of the Lord which sets the direction and focus of our life and then we are ready to be efficient and redeem the time. Understanding the will of the Lord involves what is spoken of in **Ephesians 5:10 (ESV)** “and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord.” How do we do that? We search it out in His word. We find what is pleasing to God in His Word! To me, the clearest verse in the Bible in understanding, “putting together” the will of the Lord is **Romans 12:2 (NKJV)** “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” When we come to God with a willingness to turn our back on the world system and its God ignoring ways and its corrupted values and begin to be transformed by renewing our mind with the Word of God, we will know the will of the Lord and find that it is good, acceptable, and perfect. The personal guidance part (decisions about vocation, problem solving, relationships, etc) is relatively simple. **Psalms 37:4 (NKJV)** says that you are to “Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.” How do we delight ourselves in the Lord? By refusing to be conformed to the world and by being continually transformed by the renewing our mind through the Word of God and obeying what He reveals in his word to be His will in the power of the Holy Spirit who indwells us. When we are delighting in Him, He puts his desires in our heart. When it comes to specific guidance, what we desire is what He desires because if we are delighting in Him alone He is the one who put the desire in our heart! This process takes some time in waiting on the Lord, but we are never wasting our allotted time when we are waiting on the Lord.

Once we begin to walk wisely in the will of the Lord, we need to focus on redeeming the time and using it efficiently and not being diverted from the path He has set us on. When you know the will of the Lord, it is much easier to pour yourself out Spirit empowered effort to redeem every moment of time to accomplish that which is pleasing to the Lord. Mary Slessor (1848-1915) the great Scottish missionary to

Nigeria in West Africa knew the will of the Lord for her life. Her alcoholic Father died when she was nine and at eleven she had to begin working in a factory in Dundee from 6:00 AM – 6:00 PM and yet educated herself and became a powerful force for the Gospel in a dark land. David Livingstone (1813-1873) worked in a cotton mill from 6:00 AM – 8:00 PM and he started when he was but 10 years old. Yet by the time he was 16 he had redeemed the time and had mastered Latin and many of the classics. By the time he was 27 he had completed his study of medicine and theology and went on to Africa as one of the greatest and most productive missionaries that has ever lived.

That is the biblical foundation for managing your allotted time. Others will seek to set your agenda. I encourage you to focus on understanding the will of the Lord, and to allow His will to set your agenda.

II. Practical Application of the Biblical Principles

Let me share three practical applications for managing our allotted time.

A. We Must Have a Biblical View of Life

I am convinced that the traditional view of life that I am calling “the two level view of life” is unbiblical. The two level view of life sees all of life divided up into two categories. There is the secular level and the sacred level of life. In this view, the sacred level of life is those things traditionally seen in association with God – things like church, ministry, Bible reading, witnessing, etc. The secular level of life includes your job, hobbies, leisure activities, community involvement, etc. Charles Stanley tells about the tumultuous days when he first became the Pastor of First Baptist Atlanta. He tells about an exceptionally contentious deacons meeting where a very important decision was being made concerning some business matters in the church. Dr. Stanley said, “Let’s take some time to pray about this.” He was told, “This is business; what has prayer got to do with it?” A two level view of life leads to a false view of who is really spiritual. The really spiritual people are those who are vocational Christian workers and the super-spiritual are those who are missionaries. An accountant, a sales person, a lawyer, a construction worker has to spend most of his or her time in the secular realm. About the only thing they do that is spiritual is maybe to have a ministry at church in their spare time.

The two level view of life has absolutely no Biblical basis. The Biblical view is a single level view of life. If you are a Christian, everything that you do is spiritual in the sense that it is important to God. Jesus Christ is Lord not just of the things directly related to the church; He is Lord of all! Your work matters to God. God leads His people to become accountants, sales persons, small business owners, lawyers, construction workers, full-time moms, teachers, nurses, and even pastors and missionaries. None are more spiritual than the others. He has placed you where you are to be reflectors of His glory, salt, light, and to be a disciple-maker of others in the same arena you are in. You are placed in a strategic vocation to accomplish His will in the allotted time He has given you. While you should be serving in the church, you are no more spiritual while teaching a class here than you are while you are doing your job to the glory of God.

B. We Must Have a Balanced Life

Because every area, every category of our life is important to God our life must be balanced. For most of my life, I heard people say something like this: “We must get our priorities right. A Christian’s priorities should be first God, second family, third church, and fourth vocation.” I understand what people mean by that, and I agree with the sentiment of it, but I have a hard time working out into hours – a daily schedule that vertical view of priorities. That vertical view often flows out of a two level approach to life. Let me give you what I think is a better way to think about a balanced life that enables us to wisely use the allocated time that God has given to us. I have shared this many times before, but it has been several years. This is called the “Pentathlon Approach to a Balanced Life” [adapted from Doug Sherman and William Hendricks, *Your Word Matters to God*]. The Pentathlon is an event in the Olympics that is much more popular in Europe than in America. Pentathlon is from a Greek word – *pente* (five) and *athlon* (competition). The Pentathlon consists of participants competing in five very diverse events that were originally the skills of a 19th century soldier. The five events are marksmanship (shooting), swimming, fencing, equestrianism, and cross country running. The winner of the pentathlon seldom wins any of the

five individual events. The winner is someone who is balanced and does very well at all five. It is more a horizontal view of life when it comes to planning. I would suggest that there are five very important “events”, areas of life that we are called on to balance in the allotted time God has given us.

JESUS IS LORD

Time with God	Personal Life	Family	Vocation	Church / Ministry
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Time with God – Daily quiet time, reading edifying Christian books, personal Bible studies

Personal Life – Exercise, rest, hobby, healthy habits

Family – Leading family, teaching formally and informally, fun times, marriage strengtheners

Vocation – Reasonable time doing the work, performance improvement, seasonal long hours

Church / Ministry – Connecting, growing, serving, sharing

Just like in the Pentathlon, there is always more that you could do in each area. The key is to be effective at all five – to redeem the time in scheduling appropriate time in each area that applies to you. In certain stages of life, you can do more in some areas than at other stages of life. If you are a student, you can sub education for vocation and since your family responsibilities are less, you have more time for growing in your personal life. If you are older and retired, you have way more time for ministry. You can even get senior citizen discounts on airline tickets for mission trips. You have much more time for ministry through the church. What an amazing army for the Lord senior adults can be!

C. We Must Have a Prayed Through Written Out Plan

I know that this is “out of fashion” and it is called legalistic and binding by some, but I think that it is essential. Notice that the plan is prayed through. Seek the Lord as to what His desire is for your time with Him, exercise and care for your body, family (devotional time, leisure time with them, training, etc.), vocational goals and plans, and ministry involvement and missions).

I would encourage you to set aside some time to pray and perhaps even fast and then set objectives, goals and action plans under each of life’s demands. Pray that He will give you balance, perseverance, and wisdom in implementing the plans. Identify your time wasters. Repent and remove them. Ask the Spirit of God to give you the discipline to carry out the plan!

Remember that being busy doesn’t mean you are redeeming the time. Take time, wisely used time to examine your life and make changes as God directs.

CONCLUSION

Oh the seriousness of the sin of squandering the time that God has allotted to you. Repent today. You will be amazed at how God will bless a repentant heart. I have seen God so mightily use people who came to Him late in life to accomplish amazing things in and through them. **Joel 2:25a (NKJV)** "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten..."