

BECOMING Wiser

Getting wisdom is the most important thing you can do! And whatever else you do get, good judgment.
Proverbs 4:7

LESSON 11 // WISE TIMING (PART 2)

The Book of Proverbs is full of wise sayings given to us by the Lord. It describes how life works best and how we can be our best for God—how we can make the most of our lives. One of the themes that repeatedly arises in Proverbs is using our time wisely. Solomon talks about the value of self-control when it comes to the way we use time (see Proverbs 1:2, 3; 12:11; 25:28).

In our last lesson we saw that appreciating the gift of time and focusing our attention where it matters most help us take control of time. Let's consider two more steps you must take to manage your time wisely:

1. Arrest time robbers.

It's important to remember that your time is your life. Wasted time turns into a wasted life. Because time is so important to the effectiveness of your life, the devil will do everything possible to rob your time. As Jesus explained:

John 10:10 (NLT) *The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.*

Here are seven of the most common “thieves” the devil will try to use to rob you of time:

- Poor judgment.
- Immaturity.
- Lack of inspiration.
- Procrastination.
- Laziness.
- Addiction to entertainment.
- Poor life management.

2. Adopt a time management plan.

Eventually God's purpose, principles and priorities for your life have to come together in a practical plan. You need a “time management (or investment) plan.” You need to budget your time just like you budget your money. Notice how the Bible encourages this kind of good planning:

Proverbs 16:3 (TEV) *Ask the Lord to bless your plans, and you will be successful in carrying them out.*

Proverbs 21:5 (MSG) Careful planning puts you ahead in the long run; hurry and scurry puts you further behind.

James 4:13-15 (NIV) Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” ¹⁴ Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord’s will, we will live and do this or that.”

A good time management plan includes five ongoing activities:

- *Evaluation* of your current resources, commitments and expenditures. Where are you spending your time? Evaluation also involves recognizing what is inappropriately devouring your time—activities you shouldn’t be engaged in, poor life management skills that should be improved, poor work and personal habits that need to be addressed, etc.
- *Allocation*. Decide how you really want to allocate your time based upon God’s purpose, principles and priorities for your life. Where should your time be going? What changes need to be made in the way your time is used? A key to this is actually structuring your week to reflect your priorities—giving specific time slots to particular activities and relationships. Writing these commitments into your schedule is an important step in this process. Allocation also involves looking at how different activities best flow together for effective use of your time. Time can be maximized by the way we group activities and responsibilities together. The most important things have the most amount of time allotted to them. Everything else is balanced around our central priorities.
- *Awareness of weakness*. A good life management plan also includes an awareness of your weaknesses, along with strategies to not allow these to control you.
- *Regular reviews*. As the old adage says, “plan the work” and then “work the plan.” Regular reviews allow you to see if you are still on track with God’s purpose, principles and priorities.
- *Continual adjustments*. A good time management plan is adjustable. It takes into consideration the ebb and flow of daily life and the inevitable unscheduled interruptions that come your way. It also takes into account the adjustments the Lord makes to your plans as He exercises His leadership and lordship over you. Adjustments also need to be made as seasons of your life change. You need to regularly look at ways you can more actively pursue God’s purpose, principles and priorities for your life.

To make the most of your life, you must take control of your time. This involves appreciating the gift of time, focusing your attention where it matters most, arresting “time robbers” and adopting a life management plan.

Discussion questions

1. What are your biggest time robbers? What practical strategy can help you overcome them so they don’t steal your valuable time?
2. What are the key elements of a good “time management plan” and how can this help you take control of your time?
3. What simple, practical steps can you take to begin or improve your time management plan, based on God purpose, principles and priorities for your life?