

BECOMING Wiser

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

LESSON 10 // WISE TIMING (PART 1)

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.

Proverbs 1:2, 3 (NLT) *[The purpose of these proverbs] is to teach people wisdom and discipline, to help them understand the insights of the wise.³ Their purpose is to teach people to live disciplined and successful lives, to help them do what is right, just, and fair.*

Proverbs 12:11 (NLT) *A hard worker has plenty of food, but a person who chases fantasies has no sense.*

Proverbs 25:28 (NLT) *A person without self-control is like a city with broken-down walls.*

Let's look at what God has to say to us about taking control of our time. We will focus on two key points in this lesson about this and two more in the next lesson.

1. Appreciate the gift of time.

Life consists of time. It's impossible to make the most of your life without learning to value your time. The Bible teaches us that time is a gift from God. He gives us this gift and the freedom to use it as we choose.

One day we will all give an account to God about the way we have used the gifts He gave us, including the gift of time. Did we value it or squander it?

To fully appreciate time, we must understand God's perspective of it as expressed in His Word. In the Greek language of the New Testament, there are two important words translated as "time":

- *Chronos* refers to the minutes, hours, days, months and years of our life. It's the root word for our English term "chronology." *Chronos* is the time that can be measured by a watch, a clock or a calendar. What we do with this kind of time will determine what our lives become.
- *Kairos* refers to more than the measurable moments of time. It describes the opportunities these moments provide. Inside every "*chronos*" is a "*kairos*." Inside every moment there is the opportunity that moment provides.

Note what God has to say about valuing both the *chronos* and *kairos* of life:

Psalms 90:12 (TLB) *Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should.*

Ephesians 5:15-17 (CEV) Act like people with good sense and not like fools. ¹⁶ These are evil times, so make every minute count. ¹⁷ Don't be stupid. Instead, find out what the Lord wants you to do.

Romans 13:11 (NLT) This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.

Psalms 39:4 (NLT) Lord, remind me how brief my time on earth will be. Remind me that my days are numbered—how fleeting my life is.

2. Focus attention where it matters.

It's impossible to make the most of time without making some critical decisions about life.

Many people try diligently to take control of their time, but fail repeatedly simply because they have never made these decisions.

There are three focus points that will especially help you take control of your time:

- **Focus on life purpose.** The most important questions you will ever answer in life are, "Why am I here?" or "What is my purpose?" These questions can't be answered satisfactorily apart from a relationship with God. If there is no divine purpose for my life, I have no real reason to live. If this life is all there is, then nothing really matters anyway.

But this life is not all there is. God has an eternal purpose for every person—a reason for our life (see Psalm 139:13-17). When we discover His purpose through a growing personal relationship with Jesus Christ, we start to make wise decisions about the use of our time.

- **Focus on life principles.** Knowing that God has a purpose for our life should lead us to the place of accepting the principles of His Word as our rules for living (Psalm 119:16).
- **Focus on life priorities.** At some point in life you have to decide what is most important to you. What are you going to spend your time pursuing? What is worth pursuing? What values, commitments, relationships and activities are most important based on God's purpose and His principles governing your life (Proverbs 23:4; Isaiah 55:2)?

God wants you to use your time wisely, and He has given you everything you need to do this in a way that honors Him (2 Peter 1:3-4).

Discussion questions

1. Read Psalm 90:12 and Ephesians 5:15-17. How do these verses encourage you to appreciate the time God has given you?
2. What does Psalm 139:13-17 say about God's eternal purpose for you?
3. What is most important to you—your life priorities? How should these impact the use of your time?