

## **The Stewardship of Time**

### **Ephesians 5:16, "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."**

Time has been defined as a stretch of duration in which things happen. The quality of an individual's life is revealed in what happens during that stretch of duration. Each moment of the day is a gift from God and should be husbanded with care. Philosopher William James affirmed that the great use of one's life is to be spending it for something that will outlast it, for the value of life is computed not by duration but by donation.

Yet in spite of its preciousness and vast potentialities, there is nothing that we squander so thoughtlessly as time. Moses considered it so invaluable a commodity that he prayed to be taught to measure it by days, not years (Psalms 90:12). If we are meticulously careful in the use of the days, the years will take care of themselves. A sentence that will seldom be heard on the lips of a leader is "I don't have the time." Very seldom is it strictly true. We all have been entrusted with the same amount of time. Others may have more ability, influence, or money than we, but they have no more time. The problem is not that of needing more time, but of making better use of the time we have.

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 for its highest employment. Weymouth renders the sentence, "Buy up the opportunities," time is opportunity and herein lies the importance of a careful planned life. "If we progress in the economy of time, we are learning to live. If we fail here, we fail everywhere." 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."

Therefore an individual must be careful in the selection of priorities. Comparative values of opportunities and responsibilities must be weighed. The day should be carefully planned. In the day there must be selection, rejection and concentration on the things of paramount importance. As in all else, our Lord sets the perfect example of the strategic use of time. He moved through life with measured tread, never in a hurry, though always thronged and often harassed by demanding crowds. To those who came to Him for help He gave the impression that He had no more important concern than

their interests. The secret of His serenity lay in His assurance that He was working according to His Father's plan for His life- a plan that embraced every hour and made provision for every contingency. His calendar had been arranged, and through communion with His Father, He received each day both the words and works of what He was to say and do. Jesus moved in the consciousness that there was a divine timing for the events of His life. He found the twenty-four hours of the day sufficient time to complete the whole will of God. He spent His time doing things that mattered.

Procrastination, the thief of time, is one of the devil's most potent weapons. It lies in the fact to become reluctant to make important decisions. How do you get time for it? Always take the time!

## Take Time (Poem)

By Jimmy R. Stevens

Take time to **pray** it is communion with the Divine.

Take time to **read** it is the source of knowledge.

Take time to **laugh** it is the heart beat of a merry heart.

Take time for **fun** and **rest** because it is the fountain of youth.

To take to **imagine** it is the penmanship of creativity.

Take time to **smile** it is your special light in darkness.

Take time to **die to self** it is the emergence of new birth.

Take time to be **positive** it is the language of optimism.

Take time out to **shed tears** it is the washing of the soul.

Take time to be **honest and truthful** it is the secret of influence.

Take time to **give** it is the reciprocity of blessings.

Take time to **serve** it is the matter of greatest.

Take time to **sing** it is the liberation and soaring of your spirit.

Take time to be **courageous** it is the conviction of faith.

Take time to be **quiet** it is the voice of inspiration.

Take time to **write** it is the pouring out of the soul.

Take time to **dream** the **impossible** it is the photography of hope.

Take time to be **resilient** it is the legs of strength.

Take time to be **inquisitive** it is the search for wisdom.

Take time to **listen** it is the eyes to understanding.

Take time to **overcome adversity** is the testimony of triumph.

Take time to **care** it is the fingers of tender touch.

Take time to **forgive** it is the moving of your mountain.

Take time to **speak kind words** it is the salve of healing.

Take time to **love** it is power of God.

Take time to be **like Jesus Christ**, for He is the essence of all true life.

## Time Stewardship Worksheet

On the table below, detail your last week's daily schedule of time usage (in hours.) You can work backwards, starting with yesterday, or begin today, recording the next seven days of your routine.

Activity	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Average*
Sleep / Rest								
Meals								
Career / Job								
House / Yard Work								
Self-care / Leisure / Play								
Family Activities								
Volunteering / Service								
Prayer / Spiritual Reflection								
Total Hours	24 hrs.							

\* Add the hours spent on each activity for days 1-7 and divide by 7 for daily average

### Questions for reflection:

- 1) How do these results reflect your stewardship of time?
  
- 2) Where there any surprises or new discoveries for you?
  
- 3) What areas seem out of balance or need a higher priority?
  
- 4) How does your faith influence your priorities? Where is God present and working in each of these areas?