

Manage Your Time?

Psalm 118:24

The subject I am going to talk about today was described by the following:

“Sometimes it flies, sometimes it crawls, but it always passes in inexorably. We mark it, save it, waste it, bide it, race against it. We measure it incessantly with a passion for precision that borders on the obsessive.”

We are obsessed with it; we never seem to have enough of it; and yet scientists don't even know how to explain it. When St. Augustine was asked to describe it, he said: “If no one asks me, I know what it is; but if any person should require me to tell him, I could not do it.”

What am I talking about? I am talking about time. Never before in the history of the world has time ever been so important, so valuable, and as precisely measured as it is today.

Think about this: In 1790, less than 10% of Americans had a clock of any kind in their homes, and the vast majority of those had no minute hand. Alarm clocks and wrist watches were unknown until the end of the 19th Century.

But today computers, communication satellites, global-positioning receivers, and telephone-switching systems need a precision beyond anything conceivable even fifty years ago.

In Northwest Washington, on the grounds of the United States Naval Observatory in a concrete building, is the nerve center of the U.S. Directorate of Time.

In that building sit 28 atomic clocks, four of them holding atoms of hydrogen and the rest cesium. When hit by lasers or microwaves, the atoms begin to dance with a vibration that is monitored by computers. Once each second the results are fed into America's master clock. The measurements from this and similar clocks around the world, are sent to the International Bureau of Weights and Measures outside Paris, and are accurate to one billionth of a second.

Now it is possible to experience an hour of time, a minute of time, a second of time, even a tenth of a second. But did you know that the speed of the computers with which we work every day is measured in nanoseconds, which is a time frame beyond human perception? Each nanosecond is a billionth of a second. Now to put that in perspective, the snap of a finger takes about 500 million nanoseconds. In other words, though you can conceive in your mind of a nanosecond, you cannot experience it. Never before has time been organized at a speed beyond the realm of consciousness.

Yet, even with this type of astounding and microscopic accuracy, even the most accurate clock in the world cannot answer the question of what it's measuring. It cannot answer the question, “What is time?” I guess Benjamin Franklin put it best when he said, “Dost thou love life? Then do not squander time. For that is the stuff life is made of.”

That being true, it certainly is incumbent upon us to manage our time wisely, because one day for all of us, time will run out. The psalmist here gives us three things to do in order to make the most of the time we have on this planet.

We Need To Appreciate The Value Of Having Time

Now the psalmist is obviously talking about today because he says, ***“This is the day...(Ps. 118:24)”*** But then he goes on to say that today is the day ***“the Lord has made.”*** In other words, every moment of every second, and every second of every minute, and every minute of every hour, and every hour of every day is literally a gift from God.

Think about this: God gives to every one of us the same amount of time. The millionaire doesn't have any more time in a day than a bum. The President of the United States does not have any more time in the day than a trash collector. Have you ever said to someone: “I wish I had as much time as you do?” Well, if you did, you wouldn't have any more time than you have right now. Indeed, the time you have is the time you need.

We've all thought to ourselves many times, “I just don't have the time to do all that I want to do.” We all wish there was a little extra time in the day. USA Today asked experts from various fields to chart how much time was needed for accomplishing the necessities of daily life.

These experts got together and noted how much time was needed for exercise, hygiene, work, commuting, household chores, eating, entertainment, spiritual development, sleep, and family time. When these figures were all added together, the experts said that a human being needs 42 hours a day.

Well, they were obviously wrong, as many times experts are. The fact is, you may not have all the time you need to do what you want to do, but I will guarantee you have all the time you need to do what you need to do. You see, the only things you need to do are the things that God wants you to do, and God will give you all the time you need to accomplish what He wants you to do.

A great illustration of that is the Lord Jesus Himself. Think about it. He only lived 33 years. Of that 33 years He only had three years in which to fulfill His ministry and do what God called Him to do. Yet, Jesus said in ***John 17:4: “I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.”***

God has a will for your life. God's will for your life is to do the work that He's called you to do. God has a way in which He wants His will to be done, and His work to be accomplished, and God has promised ahead of time He will give you all the time you need to do His will and His work in His way. The first key to spending time wisely is to appreciate the value of having time.

We Need To Demonstrate The Virtue Of Managing Time

Listen to this verse again: ***“This is the day the Lord has made.” (Ps. 118:24)*** This verse is not talking about yesterday. It does not say: “That was the day the Lord did make.” It is not talking about tomorrow. It does not say: “That will be the day the Lord will make.” It is speaking of today: “This is the day which the Lord has made.”

The only day you can really enjoy is today. You cannot enjoy yesterday, it's just a memory; you can't enjoy tomorrow, it's just a possibility; you can only enjoy today.

One of my favorite philosophers is the late Yogi Berra. Once someone came up to him and said, “Yogi, what time is it?” Yogi said, “You mean now?” Well, “now” is the only time that we have.

One of the things we need to learn to do every day is to make the most of the moment we are in; to focus on the now. Have you ever heard someone talk about trying to “save time?” Well, you don't really save time—you spend it. The question is: “Do you spend it wisely or not?” Now we don't really think it's a big deal to waste time, but did you know that wasting time makes you both a thief and a murderer? You see, when you

just waste time, you're stealing from God who gave it to you, and then you're killing yourself because you don't really kill time—time kills you.

It is vitally important if we are going to manage time that we understand just how valuable it is. The clock is running, and it does not stop. To realize the value of one year ask a student who failed a grade. To realize the value of one month ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby. To realize the value of one week ask the editor of a weekly newspaper. To realize the value of one hour ask two lovers who are waiting to meet. To realize the value of one minute ask a person who missed the plane. To realize the value of one second ask a person who just avoided an accident. To realize the value of one millisecond ask the person who just won the silver medal in the Olympic Games.

What I'm trying to say to you is this: Whatever you really need to do, if at all possible do it today. In a ballgame you can call time out, but there is no time out in the game of life; the clock is always running. You can't save time. Time only knows one direction, and that is forward. You cannot store time. You can put money in the bank, but you cannot put time in the bank. You cannot stretch time. There are not 61 minutes in an hour, nor are there 25 hours in a day.

We must carefully invest our time in those things that will make us most productive for the kingdom of God. Peter Drucker who is the management guru of America, said many things, but one of the best things he ever said was this:

Nothing else perhaps distinguishes effective executives as much as their tender loving care of time...unless he manages himself effectively, no amount of ability, skill, experience, or knowledge will make an executive effective.

The late Zig Ziglar had a great saying: "If you will do what you ought to do when you ought to do it, then you can do what you want to do when you want to do it." If you want to make the most out of every day, manage your time by getting done what needs to be done today and do it today.

We Need To Celebrate The Victory Of Enjoying Time

The psalmist goes on to say: ***"...I will rejoice and be glad in it."*** (Ps. 118:24) Do you see the word ***"will"***? We are to willfully take time everyday to enjoy the time we have in the day. Our danger is in getting so busy and marking time and making time, we don't take the time to enjoy time.

May I ask you a question. Are Americans busy? Do we have a lot of irons in the fire? Well you tell me. Every day in America:

108,000 of us move to a different home and 18,000 move to another state.

The United States government issues 50 more pages of regulations.

40 Americans turn 100; about 5,800 become 65; 8,000 try to forget their 40th birthdays.

167 businesses go bankrupt while 689 new ones startup and 105 Americans become millionaires.

The Smithsonian adds 2,500 things to its collections.

Americans purchase 45,000 new automobiles and trucks and smash 87,000.

20,000 people write letters to the President.

6,300 couples get divorced while 13,000 get married.

Dogs bite 11,000 people including 20 mail carriers.

Think about this: Every day in America we eat 75 acres of pizza, 53 million hotdogs, 167 million eggs, 3 million gallons of ice cream, and 3,000 tons of candy. Then we also jog 17 million miles and burn 1.7 billion calories while we're doing it.⁹

Yes, we're busy, and we can become so busy, burning the candle at both ends, we never even see the light.

Whether or not you enjoy today is up to you. This verse tells us that we need to remember that every day is a God-given day; every day is to be a God-governed day; and therefore every day should be a God-gladdened day. When you spend every day rejoicing in the Lord, in His goodness, in His grace, in His blessings, and just thanking Him for the day, it makes the day so much sweeter.

Have you ever heard the saying, "Time sure flies when you're having fun." You know that really is true. It sure is better for time to fly when you're glad, than for time to crawl when you're sad.

Well, all time really is short though it may seem long. But we need to make the most of the time that we have. So I want to close with this thought. Have you ever considered the fact that if you're not a Christian; if you have never trusted Jesus Christ; if you've never been born again, the only day you can be saved is today? You may be thinking: "Oh no, I can be saved tomorrow." No, you can't because if you get saved tomorrow, tomorrow will then be today, so you can only be saved today.

There is no time so long or so agonizingly slow as an eternity without Jesus Christ. So today, now, this moment, begin to let Jesus manage your life, and your heart, by committing whatever time you have left to Him.