

It's About Time

Psalm 90:1-4, 10, 12

Imagine a bank credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day-deleted. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course!

Each of us has such a bank. Its name is **TIME**. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off as lost whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow". You must live in the present on today's deposits. Cherish it!

I heard a story about a man who worked at a factory. One of his main jobs was to blow the factory whistle at 5:00 to indicate the workday was over. He walked to work each day and passed a jewelry store where a beautiful grandfather clock was displayed in the window. Every morning, he stopped and set his pocket watch to match the time on the grandfather clock. One morning the storeowner was out front sweeping the sidewalk and the factory worker asked him how he kept such accurate time on the grandfather clock. The jeweler said, "Oh, I set it every afternoon when the factory whistle blows at 5:00."

People live by the clock, because time is important to all of us. Benjamin Franklin said, "Do not squander time, for it is the stuff life is made of." Many frustrated people seem to always fight the clock, habitually, as a way of life. They stay up late, then they sleep as late as they can and then rush frantically to school or work, gulping down an unhealthy breakfast in the car, applying their make-up (or using a razor) at the stoplight, talking on their cell phone at the same time.

I'm amazed that Jesus never seemed to be in a hurry. Although He was doing the most important job in history (redeeming the world), and although He knew He only had a few years to do it, He never ran. He *made* time to consider the flowers and the birds of the air. He had time to put his hands on the little children and bless them. Time was His friend.

The Bible gives us some great insight into how time can become your friend rather than your enemy. Basically, God exists in a realm that is not bound by time or space. God doesn't wear a Rolex and He is the *Creator* of time! So, let's use the letters in the word TIME to learn it's importance.

TREASURE

God says we should treasure time as a valuable commodity. We number our years but God says **every day** is precious, we should treasure it and number it.

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. How valuable is an hour? Ask the businessman whose flight was delayed an hour and he missed an important business deal. How valuable is one minute? Ask the man who had the heart attack in the restaurant and an EMT happened to be sitting at the next table and CPR saved his life. How valuable is a second? Ask the person who barely missed a head on collision. How valuable is a millisecond? Ask the Olympic swimmer who missed qualifying by one. Time really is valuable. So, learn a couple of things about what this means for your family:

Treasure every moment that you have! Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift.... That's why it's called the "present!" "You can make more money, but you can't make more time."

Have you ever heard the expression, "time is money?" It's not true. **Time is much more valuable than money.**

It may be hard to make more money, but it can be done. But it is totally impossible to make more time. TIME is more valuable than money. A.W. Tozer wrote: “Time is a resource that is nonrenewable and nontransferable. You cannot store it, slow it up, hold it up, divide it up or give it up. You can’t hoard it or save it for a rainy day—when it’s lost it’s unrecoverable. When you kill time, remember that it has no resurrection.”

So, understand that you should treasure time as the most valuable asset you are given in this world. The next letter in TIME is:

INVEST

We use a lot of phrases with time that aren’t possible. You can’t buy more time and you can’t really find more time. We speak of making time, but that’s impossible, too.

1. You can’t save time - you can only invest it.

Time is more valuable than money, but it’s like money in that it can be spent and invested. It’s different from money though, because while money can be saved, time can’t. If you don’t use it, you lose it. Forever. In the early 1970s Jim Croce wrote a song that said, **“If I could save time in a bottle, the first thing that I’d like to do, is to save every day ‘till eternity passes away—just to spend them with you.”** Those are great lyrics, and it would be nice if we could save time, but you can’t. In fact, a few months after he wrote that song, he was tragically killed in a plane crash in Louisiana at the age of 30. You can’t save time.

We have all kinds of time-saving appliances...like microwave ovens. Guys love to take short cuts to “save time.” Show me some of the time you’ve saved—where is it? You can’t save it you can only spend it and invest it. At a graduation commencement at his alma mater, Wheaton College, Billy Graham said: “Time is the capital that God has given us to invest. People are the stocks in which we are to invest our time, whether they’re blue chips or penny stocks or even junk bonds.”

2. Where you invest time reveals what is most important to you

There are 168 hours in each week. The average person will spend about 56 of those hours sleeping, about 24 of those hours in eating and personal hygiene, and about 50 of those hours working or traveling to work. That means there are only 35 hours a week of “discretionary” time left over. That’s about 5 hours per day. Where are you investing those hours?

If I were to follow you around and observe you for those 5 hours, after about 10 days, I could tell you what is most important in your life. You might not like it, or agree with it, but for some of you, surfing the Internet is most important to you. For others of you, watching television, or reading magazines or playing golf is what’s most important....

How much of that discretionary time do I devote to our Lord? How much to our family? A study of 1,500 households at University of Michigan found mothers working outside the home spend an average of 11 minutes a day on weekdays, and thirty minutes a day on weekends with the children not including meals. Fathers average 8 minutes a day on weekdays and 14 minutes a day on weekends in activities with their kids.

Have you ever heard this excuse? Some dad or mom will say, “I don’t spend much time with my family, but the little time I do spend is **‘quality time.’**” I don’t really like that phrase, because it is most often used as an excuse for **not** spending much time together. “Quality time” is really a misnomer, because all time has the same quality. Consider this second...was it of higher quality than the previous second...or of this second right now? It’s like talking about “quality money.” If I offered you a hundred-dollar bill, would you say, “No, it’s wrinkled.” I’d rather have that new, crisp \$5 because it’s of better quality.”

I prefer “fun family time” or “meaningful family time”. there is no substitute for investing a large quantity of time with your family.

If they're important, you'll show it by the amount of discretionary time you give them. Irma Bombeck wrote: "Children Are Like Kites. You spend years trying to get them off the ground. You run with them until you are both breathless. They crash ... they hit the roof ... you patch, comfort and assure them that someday they will fly. Finally, they are airborne. They need more string, and you keep letting it out. They tug, and with each twist of the twine, there is sadness that goes with joy. The kite becomes more distant, and you know it won't be long before that beautiful creature will snap the lifeline that binds you together and will soar as meant to soar ... free and alone. Only then do you know that you have done your job."

Joyce and I heard all our life, "children should be seen and not heard". That was maxim that our parent's generation believed to some degree but not as much as their own parents had believed it. What that did not mean was that we should abuse our children. What that did not mean was we should ignore our children. Loosely they meant that children had a place in the home and it was to be trained and be obedient to their parents. It would never have occurred to me at age 10 to offer sage advice to parents. I remember enjoying the same TV programs my parents did! I liked the same movies and we could set our bedtime by what was coming on TV. We sat in a room full of adults and listened to what they were talking about. I don't remember a single time when any of them asked for or listened to one of my opinions.

We have certainly turned a page in that way of thinking. Many homes today are driven by the desires of the children. From my observations it has not been a good change in many ways. Too many children today are self-absorbed and narcissistic. Our daughter was lamenting that she had no time to even do laundry. She had to be up till the wee hours to get it done. Why? Jorie wants to do girl scouts and soccer and dance and gymnastics. Logan wants to be on the golf team, soccer team and do cross country. There is not even one night a week that she is home before 8 pm. Why? Because that is what the children want to do.

There is a great need to spend time with our family but there is also the reality that running a home has time requirements too. So, a balance must be struck when it comes to UNNECESSARY extracurricular activities. A child does not need to do everything on the schedule. My encouragement to our daughter and to all parents is help your child understand that there are not enough hours to do everything and lead them to make choices.

Speaking of time.... Our time is gone for this morning. Come back tonight for the conclusion of this lesson.

The next letter in family TIME is:

MANAGE

I remind you that all the time we receive comes from God and we only manage it. God is the creator of time, and He controls it.

A time management expert was teaching a seminar for executives. He placed a large, clear open-mouthed jar in front of the group. Next, he put seven or eight large rocks into the jar until it was full. “Is the jar full?” He asked. Everyone nodded. Then he took pebbles and filled up the jar with the small rocks until they reached the rim. “Is the jar full?” By now, they didn’t answer. So, he poured fine sand in. “Is the jar full?” Some nodded. He proceeded to take a pitcher of water and filled up the jar again. “What’s the lesson about time management?” he asked. Hands shot up, and everyone agreed “No matter how busy you are you can always fit more things into your schedule.” “Wrong.” he replied. “The lesson is: unless you put the big rocks in first, they will never fit in. You must figure out what the big rocks are for you.”

What are the big rocks in your life? Giving time to God? Giving time to your marriage and to your children? If you don’t put those big rocks in first, someone else will fill up your jar. Understand:

1. Every moment is a gift from God that must be managed wisely

Time management is a hot topic. In his book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey writes: “Time management is a misleading concept. You can’t really manage time. You can’t delay it, speed it up, save it or lose it. No matter what you do time keeps moving forward at the same rate. The challenge is not to manage time, but to manage ourselves.” The Bible uses another word. Instead of managing your time, it speaks of “redeeming” the time, which is an even better idea.

Paul writes: *“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil.”* (Ephesians 5:14-15)

The phrase “walk circumspectly,” means to be constantly looking around to make the most of every opportunity. We should live, looking for every opportunity to invest time wisely. When an opportunity passes, it can’t be reclaimed—it is gone forever. That’s what it means to redeem the time.

2. If you don’t manage your time - someone else will manage it for you

If you don’t control your schedule, someone will always be happy to do it for you. Some people complain they just don’t have enough time to spend with their family. You’ve got the same amount of time as everyone else; you just aren’t managing your time wisely or managing yourself wisely.

The final letter in TIME is:

ENJOY

The time you spend with your family should be enjoyable. It should be the best time of your life. Here is a couple of ways to enjoy your family time.

1. Say NO to family time-robbers

There will always be something else to do. There will always be somewhere else you can be, but if you are going to make spending time with your family a priority you are going to have to learn the power of that little two letter word, “NO.”

You need to understand that when you say, “YES” to family time, then you have already said, “NO” to everything else.

Never allow interruptions and other demands to detract from your family time. A thousand years from now, what will have been more important, spending time with family, or watching some television show? Nobody on their deathbed ever said, “I wish I had spent more time watching TV.”

Several years ago, Ken Griffey, Jr. was invited to the “Players Choice Awards” where he was to be awarded the player of the decade award. That’s a big deal...on national television. He beat out players like Barry Bonds and Mark McGwire. But when he found out when the award was to be given, he declined to attend. He had something more important to do. His five-year-old son, Trey, was playing in his first baseball game, and Ken wasn’t going to miss it. Good for him!

You need to learn to say, “NO” to some of the things that take you away from your family. Here’s another reason to work on enjoying family time:

2. You are Saying “YES” to happy memories!

Our kids are only going to be with us for a few years, so we must make the most of it. James writes in James 4:14 *“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.”*

Turn and look at the person next to you. Realize that they don’t have very long to live! So, let’s make some happy memories of TIME...Time to Treasure, Time to Invest, Time to Manage, Time to Enjoy! Here’s a way to help: Add some **margin** to your life.

- A lot of people are on overload and headed for a crash. Consider these statistics:
- We spend eight months of our lives opening junk mail, two years of our lives playing phone tag with people who are busy or who are not answering;

five years waiting for people who are trying to do too much and are late for meetings. We have much technology and are easily accessible, yet still failing in saving time. We need to learn where the “off” button is on cell phones!

- We’re a piled-on, stretched-to-the limit society. We’re chronically rushed, chronically late, chronically exhausted. Many of us feel like Job did when he said, *“I am not at ease, nor am I quiet; I have no rest, for trouble comes.”* Job 3:26

Overload comes when we have too much activity in our lives. Simply put, we’re stressed by the pace of life. Is there a solution? Thankfully YES! The solution is to put some margin into your life. **Margin is breathing room.** It’s keeping a little reserve that you’re not using up. It’s not going from one meeting to the next to the next with no space in between. Margin is the space between your load and your limit. Hopefully your load is not heavier than your limits. Most of us are more overloaded with **NO MARGIN** for error in our life!!

“Margin-less” is being 30 minutes late to the doctor’s office because you were 20 minutes late getting out of the hairdresser because you were 10 minutes late dropping the children off at school because something unexpected came up and ruined your perfectly timed out plan. That’s margin-less. A good plan leaves margin...room for error!

“Four benefits of putting margin in your life”

- Peace. When you’re not hurrying and worrying all the time, you have time to think. Time to relax. Time to enjoy life. We had some birds come into the building last week. We were busy looking for something in the attic, in a rush...they started singing, and it was just like we’d been given an invitation: “Just relax. Unless you’re sitting directly under the bird, relax.”

- Better health. Unrelenting stress harms our bodies. We all know that, yet we let it continue day after day after day. Many times the only time we get margin in our lives is when the heart attack almost happens or does happen or the blood pressure skyrockets. Why do we wait until our health plummets before we make this decision? The truth is, our body needs downtime to heal. Race cars make pit stops occasionally to get repaired. You can't fix anything going 200 miles an hour. Yet we try to be repaired while we're still racing through life. Margin builds in time for better health.
- Stronger relationships. Lack of margin is one big reason for the collapse of the American family today. When we don't make relationships a priority and make time for each other, our relationships suffer. The truth is relationships take time, and margin provides the time to sit and talk, to listen and enjoy one another, and to provide the comfort we each need.
- Usefulness in ministry. When you're overloaded by activity, you can only think of yourself. You're in survival mode, just trying to make it through another day. But being available to God for his use makes all the difference in this world. When you have no margin in your life, when God taps you on the shoulder and says, "I'd like you to do this for me," your first response isn't joy. Your first response is, "Oh, no! Another thing to do! Sorry, God—I'd like to do that, but I'm just too busy." We end up resenting the great opportunities God brings into our lives. But when you have margin, you're available for God to use.

You don't have to live on overload. You don't have to live in survival mode. Begin today to build a buffer around your schedule. Then enjoy the benefits of margin—and see what God does next!

TIME is God's precious gift...thanks for taking the time to be here for this message...may God use it now to change our lives for all time!