

Efficient Use Of Time

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I. The Scriptures Emphasize Two Things About Time:

A. Brevity Of Life

I Chronicles 9:15 (NLT) - We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a shadow, gone so soon without a trace.

Psalms 103:15 (NLT) - Our days on earth are like grass; like wildflowers, we bloom and die.

James 4:14 (NLT) - How do you know what will happen tomorrow? For your life is like the morning fog - it's here a little while, and then it's gone.

B. Making The Most Of Our Time And Resources

1. Time management is really self-management. We can't manage time (it runs on its own). Time can't be stopped, stored or stretched. We can only manage ourselves.

Psalms 90:12 - Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Ephesians 5:15-16 - Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.

2. Planning doesn't box you in. It frees you.

3. Managing yourself simply means that you are a good steward of your time, talent and treasure.

II. Why manage yourself?

A. You may not accomplish what really needs to get done.

1. There is time available for everything God wants us to do.

I Thessalonians 5:24 - The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. God is Faithful.

2. He will give you the time to do what you are supposed to do.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 - There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven

John 17:4 - "I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do."

B. We are held accountable for how we use our time in managing our time, talent, treasure (Matthew 25:14-28)

C. The demands of each day force us to decide what to do with our time

III. Four Main Elements Of Good Time Management:

1. Plans Or Objectives
2. Time Scheduling System
3. Motivation And Discipline
4. Time Saving Ideas

A. Plans/Objectives - I Corinthians 9:26

1. You have to have a plan. It keeps you focused. You have to be selective. Assess priorities: mental, physical, spiritual, social, family, ministry/business, etc.
2. You can set your objectives at the first of the year or on your birthday. Check it throughout the year (intermediate goals). Start small and measurable. Success breeds success.

B. Time Scheduling System

Four Steps:

1. List Activities - create a "To-Do" list
2. Ask If Assignable - many activities can be delegated
3. Access Priorities - The Ivy Lee 6-Step Process: In the 1930s, the President of Bethlehem Steel, Charles Schwab, confronted a management consultant named Ivy Lee and said, "Show me a way to get things done, and if it works, I will pay anything within reason." The consultant gave him a simple 6-step process that became the standard for measuring the productivity of managers. The Ivy Lee plan was simple. Managers needed only to list the six most important things to be done that day, in order of importance, the most important being first. Then, the manager was to work on those tasks in order, not proceeding from one task to the next until the preceding task had been accomplished.
4. Schedule
 - a. Start off with a day-timer style calendar
 - b. Schedule your time in blocks (major activities)
 - c. Don't schedule items too closely or be too detailed

- d. Find out where your time is going (keep a log for a week or two)
- e. After you list the activities for the day, ask yourself if anything is assignable. Then assign a number of 1, 2, or 3 by each item. First tackle all the 1's
- f. Schedule in a physical workout 2-3 times a week. There is a correlation between physical well-being and mental capacity.

C. Motivation/Discipline

1. The secret to discipline is to have the proper motivation; that way, you are not gritting your teeth and just forcing things.'
2. Determine what motivates you.
3. Ask God to give you a joyful enthusiasm for the work that you have to do.

D. Time Saving Ideas

- Look at your schedule the night before or first thing in the morning. Review why you have planned these activities
- Always be sensitive to God's leading, which may displace your plans
- If someone cancels an appointment, be ready to redeem the time
- If you don't get to an important item, put it on the next day's schedule and reevaluate its position of importance.
- Force yourself to make decisions. You can't guide a ship that isn't moving.
- Learn to say no to others and to yourself.
- Always be on the lookout for a better way of doing things
- Brainstorm with people who have jobs similar to yours
- Use your time twice (i.e. listen to messages while driving)
- Pace yourself. Learn what your cycle is. Do tough jobs in the morning.
- Read a book on speed-reading.
- Think.