

Subject: *Use Your Time Wisely*

Scripture: *Ephesians 5:15-17*

The Bible has a lot to say in these three short verses. Verse 15 and 17 both speak about being wise. Verse 16 is right in the middle and it speaks of redeeming the time or making the most of time. You can tell if a person is wise or foolish by how they use their time. A wise person uses his time wisely.

Psalms 90:12 *So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.*

In this message I want to give you some Biblical reasons why you should use your time wisely and then offer a few thoughts on how to use it wisely. Look again at verse 17. To use time wisely we have to know God's will, and we find God's will in the Scriptures.

1. Use your time wisely because the days are evil

We live in a world that will rob us of time. We have three enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil, and these three enemies will steal our time and keep us from doing the will of God.

2. Use your time wisely because it is valuable

Jonathan Edwards preached a sermon titled, "The Preciousness of Time and the Importance of Redeeming It." Time is precious and we should treat it that way. You can buy many things in this world, but you can't buy more time. The most valuable thing you have is time. That's why it is a shame to waste time. An interesting thing happened in American history in 1867, when Secretary of State W. H. Seward bought Alaska from the country of Russia for the price of \$7.2 million. At that time, some people considered the territory of Alaska practically worthless and so they gave this purchase a name. They called it "Seward's Folly." But Sec. Seward knew the value of Alaska and made a very wise decision to buy it.

3. Use your time wisely because it is brief and quickly passing

One reason time is so valuable is its brevity. Someone once asked Billy Graham what was the biggest surprise of his life, and he said, "It is the brevity of life." The Bible reminds us:

Job 7:6 *My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle...*

Job 14:1 *Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.*

Psalms 39:4-5 ⁴ *LORD, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.* ⁵ *Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity. Selah.*

Psalms 89:47 *Remember how short my time is...*

Psalms 90:10 *The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*

James 4:14 *Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

A wise person knows he has a limited amount of time and it is passing by quickly, like sands in the hourglass. On a tombstone we see the date of birth and the date of death and between those two dates is a little dash that represents a lifetime. Someone described it like this:

*When as a child, I laughed and wept, time crept.
When as a youth, I dreamed and talked, time walked.
When I became a full-grown man, time ran.
When older still I daily grew, time flew.
Soon I shall find in traveling on, time gone.*

4. Use your time wisely because it is easily lost and cannot be recovered

In the early 1970s a popular singer named Jim Croce recorded a song titled “Time in a Bottle.” It was a love song about his desire to save time in a bottle so he could spend it with someone he loved. The song eventually became the number one song in America, but ironically by that time Jim Croce was dead.

Once time is gone, just like sands in the hourglass, it can’t be recovered. If we are not wise time can slip away from us, and we say where has time gone? The Greek language had two word for time: 1) *chronos* (chronology) – time as it passes on a calendar or clock (minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years); 2) *kairos* – a specific time or opportunity. This is the word used in Ephesians 5:16. Make the most of your opportunities because they come and they go. A famous Greek sculptor named Lysippus carved a strange looking figure of a man. He had one great lock of hair on his forehead and was completely bald on the back of his head and he had wings on his feet. He named the statue “Opportunity.”

God brings two important things into our lives: 1) responsibilities and 2) opportunities. Our responsibilities are things we must do. Opportunities are things we can do, but we have to be aware of them when they come. God set up divine appointments and we need to recognize them. We can’t regain time and opportunities that we’ve lost, but we can learn from our mistakes and make the most of our time that remains.

5. Use your time wisely by having plans and priorities

To make the most of your time, you need to plan it. Make a list of things to do and sort out what it most important. Plan your work and then work your plan.

Proverbs 14:23 *In all labor there is profit: but the talk of the lips tendeth only to poverty.*

Talk is cheap. After all is said and done, more is said than done. We have all these time-saving devices and yet we still don’t get things done. Do you know where your time goes? Everybody has the same amount of time in a week (168 hours). Take a pen and sheet of paper and put down how you spend your time, and it may surprise you. Remember three words:

- ✓ Organize – The weakest ink is better than the strongest memory (to-do list)
- ✓ Prioritize – Do first things first (give God the first part of every day)
- ✓ Analyze – take a look at your plans and then take a look back and evaluate

Dr. Adrian Rogers said: “There’s enough time in every day to do gracefully everything God wants you to do.” Ask the question: Lord, what do you want me to do today?

It’s amazing what you can do in just 30 minutes a day. In 30 minutes a day, you can get in better shape. In 30 minutes a day, you can read your Bible through in a year. In 30 minutes a day, you can strengthen your marriage and the relationship with your children. In 30 minutes a day you can reach out to someone in need by sending a few cards and making a few calls.

Take time to work—it is the price of success

Take time to think—it is the source of power

Take time to play—it is the secret of youth

Take time to read—it is the foundation of wisdom

Take time to love and be loved—it is the reason for life

Take time to laugh—it is medicine for the heart

Take time to worship—it brings life into focus

Take time to pray—it brings God near and washes the dust of earth from our eyes

Take time to be holy—for without holiness no man shall see the Lord

6. Use your time wisely because God will hold you accountable for it

Romans 14:12 *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

The Bible says we must give an account for every word. If we must give an account for every thing spoken, surely we must give an account of every hour spent.

The Bible says we must give an account for the talents God has given us. If we must give an account for how we used our talents, surely we must give account of how we used our time.

7. Use your time wisely by living with eternal values in mind

There is a famous cathedral in Europe known for its three arched doorways that lead into the sanctuary. Over the right entrance are these words: “All that pleases is but for a moment.” Over the left entrance are these words: “All that troubles is but for a moment.” Over the main entrance is this inscription: “All that is important is eternal.” Jonathan Edwards prayed: “O God, stamp eternity on my eyeballs!”

We should live every day in light of judgment day. You can’t relive yesterday, and you are not guaranteed tomorrow, but you have today and you can be sure of that coming day when you will stand before the Lord.

Hebrews 4:7 *To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.*

2 Corinthians 6:2 *...behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*