

Giving Your Time In a "Make-Time-For-Yourself World" Eph 5:15-17

Intro: It feels like it has been forever since the last time I preached. I know it has only been 5 Sunday's but it feels like forever. With Thanksgiving just three weeks away you might be expecting me to preach a series of messages on Thankfulness or Thanksgiving, and I do plan to preach on Thanksgiving but not from the traditional view but from a slightly different view.

You see since the word Thanksgiving is made up of two words, and we traditionally hear messages about the first half of the word I thought I would preach a series this month on the second half of the word, "GIVING".

Now I know some of you are thinking "Oh no, here we go we are going to hear all about how we need to give more money to the church." And you will be right but not today. The idea of giving is about much more than money. Our natural minds automatically go to money when we hear the word giving. Giving is about who we are and how we live our lives.

Today, in the first message on giving, I want to speak to you about **Giving Your Time In a "Make-Time-For-Yourself World."** What if God spoke to you about how you spent your time and how He viewed your use of the time He has given you; what would He say? He might say something like this...**[play video]**

Our text today gives us three warnings that if we take serious then we will be able to **Give Our Time** in a way that is pleasing to God.

[Read Eph 5:15-17/pray/Dismiss Jr. Church]

Why are there 60 minutes in an hour rather than 10 or 100? Sometimes you don't even get 60. Still, why is 60 our reference point? How come our days never went decimal? Because the people of ancient Sumeria, the first to keep time, hated fractions. They used a numbering system based on 60 rather than 10 because 60 could be divided by 10 different whole numbers (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 10, 12, 15, 20, and 30), whereas 10 can only be divided by 2 and 5 without using fractions. We've kept their 60-minute hour, maybe because there's just never been enough hours in the day to change the faces of every clock in the world.

Max Lucado says, "America -- the country of shortcuts and fast lanes. We're the only ... nation on earth with a mountain called 'Rushmore.'"

We are constantly being asked to give of our time to something; it is hard to decide what is important and what isn't. Our text today gives us a very sobering warning as to why we need to make sure we are spending our lives correctly, it says "**...because the days are evil.**"

1. Be Careful with Your Time V. 15a

A. Circumspectly means *Be exact or exactly, be diligent or diligently, be perfect or perfectly.*

- 1) Paul says we are to "...walk circumspectly..." or better exactly, diligently, perfectly.
- 2) It is impossible to maintain purity and holiness of heart and life without great circumspection and care.
- 3) Because of our responsibilities as believers to live as children of the light and to expose evil we need to be careful how we live our lives and this takes time.

B. This is where being **careful** with our time comes in.

- 1) We can't walk carefully and be careless with our time because it takes time to frequently consult our rule, and the directions we have in the sacred Scriptures.
- 2) Paul is telling to walk like the people we say we are and that takes time.
- 3) That is why this verse ends talking about be wise not foolish.

C. A fool is one who isn't careful with his time.

- 1) Careful how he uses his time
- 2) Careful how he is seen by others in the use of his time
- 3) Careful how much time he has leftover for God

D. Excuses people give:

- 1) For not helping around the church is because they ***“Don’t have enough time.”***
- 2) For not reading their Bibles ***“There just doesn’t seem to be enough hours in a day.”***
- 3) For not witnessing or going on visitation, ***“The day is just too short”***
- 4) For not coming to Wednesday night church, ***“I just run out of time.”***

E. How many hours do we really have?

- 1) Let me ask you, does anyone here have more time than someone else?
- 2) No. We all have 24 hrs in a day, 168 hrs a week 8,760 hrs a year and, if you live to be 80 years old 200,800 hrs in a lifetime.
- 3) The answer to not having enough time isn’t more time...none of us will ever get that.
- 4) The answer is being **Careful** how we use the time we have.

F. In some European countries, property is often protected by a high wall, the top of which is covered with embedded broken glass to discourage intruders who might try to climb over it. One can sometimes see a cat walking along the top of these walls. The cat walks *circumspectly, carefully, precisely*. It picks up one paw and carefully places it where there is no glass. When that paw is in place, the cat reaches forward tentatively and gingerly with the next one.

G. We are to walk circumspectly or be careful with our time during our relatively few years on earth.

H. We are to be testimonies to the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Be *Wise with Your Time V. 15b, 17*

A. *“Not as fools”* could be better translated as *“Not as unwise”*

- 1) Only a fool drifts with the wind and tide.
- 2) A wise man marks out his course, sets his sails, and guides the rudder until he reaches his destination.

B. When a man wants to build a house, he first draws his plans so he knows what he is doing.

- 1) Yet, how many Christians plan their days so that they use their opportunities wisely?
- 2) True, we cannot know what a day may bring forth (James 4:13-17).
- 3) But it is also true that a planned life can better deal with unexpected events.
- 4) Someone said, *“When the pilot does not know what port he is heading for, no wind is the right wind.”*

C. Today we are in constant danger of becoming enslaved by the very things that were supposed to make our life more convenient. Notebook computers, fax machines, pagers, and cell phones all threaten to take us hostage. No matter where we go, our work can go with us. In truth, our time (his life) is not our own.

Even if we could break free of the ever-encroaching demands of career, our own responsibilities are enough to occupy our every waking moment, things like volunteer work at the church and civic duties, not to mention family responsibilities. We need to spend quality time with our children. We need to be both physically and emotionally present for our spouse. The yard needs cared for and the cars need serviced, the checkbook needs balanced. We need...the list seems endless.

Somewhere in our hectic schedule we must find time to build lasting friendships, time to maintain a quality devotional life, time to read for personal and spiritual development, and time to exercise. No wonder people are sometimes tempted to throw up their hands in despair! Is there a solution, a way out? I think so, but it won't be easy. Busyness is addictive and it's hard to regain command of our life once we've yielded it to the expectations of others. The key is **Being Wise with our time** and control. Are we going to be governed by external pressures -- the desires of others -- or will we allow the internal witness of the Holy Spirit to set our agendas?

D. We need to make **wise us of our time**

3. Be *Thrifty with Your Time V. 16*

A. The Message translates v.16 this way, ***“Make the most of every chance you get. These are desperate times!”***

B. The phrase *“Redeeming the time”* in the Greek actually means to *“Make wise and sacred use of every opportunity for doing good...”*

C. We must take our knowledge of Christ and apply it to our everyday lives and be especially aware of our conduct with unbelievers.

D. Satan wants to take charge of all your time...not give you any for yourself.

E. We are to be **Thrifty** with our time because time is...

1) Precious—

(a) We only have 24 hrs in a day

(b) All the time at one's disposal following spiritual regeneration is to be used for doing good.

(1) Specific opportunities for doing good should not be wasted.

(2) This implies that we should not allow ourselves to be controlled by our circumstances, but rather should make use of time as a valuable commodity or resource, as a master does with his servant, or a merchant with an opportunity to acquire the best goods.

2) Short—Ps 89:47, 90:10

3) Has a purpose—Ecc. 3:1

4) Evil (Desperate) V. 16b

F. **ILL:** Make a quick mental list of the things you really value. Undoubtedly your list would include your loved ones, your home, your church, and perhaps a few other possessions. Would it also include your *time*?

Paul's admonition to live carefully, "making the most of every opportunity," is a reminder of the preciousness of time. Think about it. If someone takes away your money, you may not like it, but you can earn more money. If someone or something takes away your job or even your house, it might be very difficult, but you can get another job or house. But if something takes your time and wastes it, you can never get it back. Those hours or days are gone, never to be retrieved. That makes time a very valuable thing indeed. What are you doing with the time God has given you? Are you "making the most of every opportunity," allowing him to use you and your time as he sees fit?

Conclusion: Most of us know how to manage our time. It is pretty simple really. What most of us miss are compelling reasons to manage our time. We know the "how" but miss the "why." Here are six foundational reasons that should motivate us to manage our time properly.

1. **It is a matter of stewardship.** If we view our life as not our own; that we are merely stewards of it; and that we are given control over it for 70 or 80 years then we will likely make wise decisions with it!
2. **It is a matter of personal fulfillment.** When we get to the end of our life we should desire to be able to feel a sense of pride and satisfaction that we have lived well, helped others, and achieved much. This drives us to not waste time but to use it wisely.
3. **It is a matter of providing for and being responsible to your friends and family.** I owe some of my time - serious amounts - to my friends and family. If I let myself get out of control, they suffer the loss and that is something I do not want for them. I manage myself and my time so that I can give valuable portions of it to those who matter most.
4. **It is a matter of accomplishment and purpose.** We should manage our self and our time because we want to fulfill our mission here. That is to use our abilities to enhance the lives of others. If we don't manage our self, we hinder our ability to accomplish what God wants and to fulfill our purpose. This drives us to manage right.

It is a matter of self-control and choice. One of the reasons we should manage our self closely is because we can! Imagine that. What separates us from the animals is that we do not live by instinct, but by self-control and choice. We can choose when and where we will spend our resources. That in and of itself sounds like fun!

I am sure you can come up with more reasons, and I would encourage you to do so!

Here is your challenge for today...I am challenging all of you to commit today to spend as much time in Bible reading and pray each day as you do in watching TV.