

Margins

Lesson 3: Time Margins

I. Introduction

In reference to a sundial in 200 B.C., "The gods confound the man who first found out how to distinguish hours! Confound him too. Who in this place set up a sun-dial to cut and hack my days so wretchedly into small portions." (Plautus)

We all have a problem Bob Greene called the "twitching of America." We are "hyper living," just skimming along the surface of life (Zach).

II. The Problem

Gandhi said, "There is more to life than increasing its speed."

The speed and demand for productivity has caused us all to push the natural limits of time. Consider the rhythm of an agrarian society. When the sun went down, all work stopped. And then came the light bulb.

III. Our Need: An Unhurried Life

Note: An unhurried life does not equal a lazy life

A. Perspective: there is a time for everything (Ecc. 3:1-8)

Col. 4:5 "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity."

B. We all need:

1. Personal Time
2. Family Time
3. Sharing Time
4. Work Time
5. Play Time
6. Time for God (Ps. 46:10)

C. Time is a commodity to be measured out according to our priorities and commitments (not to be stolen by casual, loud marauders who demand attention). Take responsibility for your schedule.

Eph. 5:6 "Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient."

Ps. 90:12 "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."

Make a schedule/calendar and stick to it:

1. Begin by asking the Lord to be the Lord of your schedule too.
 2. Start with the non-negotiables (work, school, church). If you are the family's chief "driver, cook and bottle washer" consider using a different colored pencil for each child's schedule that you have to cover.
 3. Remember to consider your "rhythms"
 4. Add in the "want tos."
 5. Plan for free time.
 6. Reevaluate your priorities if necessary.
 7. Include your spouse and children in the planning stage
 8. Have someone hold you accountable.
 9. At the end of each day, review your schedule. Be prepared for tomorrow's activities.
 10. After three weeks, reevaluate and change what needs to be adjusted.
- D. Making plans is a good thing. Just remember who controls life itself.
- Prov. 16:9 "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps."
- Prov. 21:5." The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."

IV. Some practical suggestions:

- A. Learn to say no. Like rose bushes our calendars need pruning for maximum productivity.
- B. Expect the unexpected. Create some time margins
- C. Unplug. Turn off social media, TV and the radio (or at least control them).
- D. Practice simplicity. "Everything we own, owns us."
- E. Learn to separate technology from time. (Time saving devices don't really save us time.)
Try disconnecting from clocks, watches, alarms, beepers, email, and phones for a period of time.
- F. Work on a longer perspective of time. Consider the dot versus the line concept.
- G. Fake yourself out. Purposefully stand in a long line at the store. Get in one lane on the freeway and don't change lanes all the way home. Park on the other side of the lot.
- H. Practice a Sabbath.

V. Prioritize time with the Lord-"Speed does not yield devotion."