
TIME

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WHAT'S THIS STUDY ALL ABOUT?



I sat in Alpha Phi's living room as a freshman during the annual Senior Week listening to advice being passed down to us younger generations. Below are a few pearls of wisdom thrown out that day:

"Make sure you train for the half marathon with other sisters."

"Seek out leadership in Alpha Phi and other organizations on campus."

"Go to every social event."

"Attend as many philanthropies on campus as possible."

"Make sure you make it to all the football games each fall."

"Play on the intramural sports teams."

"Make sure you keep studying hard and keeping your grades as high as possible."

"Call your family and long distance friends on a regular basis to keep in touch."

"Make sure you go on Alpha Phi road trips and Spring Breaks."

"Be the last person to bed and the first person to wake up, it's worth being part of everything going on."

Here is my brain's translation for what I heard that day: "Never sleep again while you run yourself ragged in college. I'll sleep when I'm dead, I guess...which might be sooner than later with how busy I am going to be the next few years!"

Time is the most precious resource that any of us get, this side of heaven. It's the one resource we can't get back. Benjamin Franklin once said, "You may delay but time will not." Since time is so limited, it's something we want to invest and steward to the best of our ability. It's a gift that God has given us to spend our time in ways that fulfill us and bring Him glory.

In America, this can be hard because our culture's view of time is filtered through the lens of efficiency and productivity. God doesn't want us to waste time, so in and of themselves, efficiency and productivity are not bad, but when it comes to measuring how our time is spent only through these paradigms, our perception becomes warped. In this study, we are going to look at what God has to say about time and how using it well will allow us to be FULLY ALIVE.

YOU MAY DELAY
BUT TIME
WILL NOT

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

WHAT INFLUENCES YOUR VIEWS ON TIME?

Give them some time to read over silently

We often say, “I don’t have enough time. I wish there were more hours in a day,” however, the reality is you don’t need more hours in a day. God has given you all the time you need to accomplish his purposes for your life. If you are too busy, it means you are either trying to do more than what he has asked of you, or you are enslaved to one of the following needs:

Approval and Appreciation

“I can’t say no to anyone who asks me to do something because I don’t want to let them down” or “I need to keep checking Facebook to see how many likes or comments I got.”

Emotional and Physical Comfort

“I have to study or work non-stop so that I can find comfort in or have a peace of mind that I’ll get what I want in the future.”

Security and Control

“I can’t delegate anything because I can always do it better” or “I get angry when my schedule is interrupted last minute because it interferes with my goals.”

Influence and Power

“I have to fill my schedule in order to get more knowledge, money, friends, or prestige on campus.”

In addition to filling our time with work and activities that bring about some coveted feeling or accomplishment, the Bible also addresses the busy-body syndrome (1 Tim. 5). Busy-bodies are lazy people who stay busy doing meaningless things out of boredom. These activities include daydreaming, fantasizing, gossiping, texting, playing video games, reading tweets or blogs, and Facebook messaging and wall browsing. Author Trisha Wilkerson says, “The busy-body is more concerned with the actions, thoughts, and juicy tidbits about others. The sin of a busybody is often when desires are disappointed and we either demand or settle for the pleasure of knowing others’ business. Instead of being connected relationally to God and people, we slip into false intimacy and gather knowledge that doesn’t grow us, but instead wastes time... [These things] take up mind and heart space that should be occupied by prayer and purpose.”

Read questions aloud and discuss

Tyler Zach, ‘Gifts of God.’ Cru Press

In light of all these things, what keeps you busy and why?

What do you spend most of your time doing?

What does it reveal about what you want or love?

WHAT DOES GOD SAY ABOUT TIME?

Pick and read one of these Bible passages:

Ephesians 5:1-17

Galatians 6:7-9

Psalm 39:4-6

Colossians 4:2-6

How is the passage urging you to think differently about time?

What is the passage urging you to do?

How can we glorify God with our time?

Pick your favorite 2 or 3
and read in study

Ask Q's and discuss

“The Gospel confronts our complaint that we have no time. Jesus was the busiest person ever to live and never complained despite the fact he only had three years of ministry here on earth. Even though Jesus had more to do than you and I will ever have, he still got away to spend time with his Father (Mark 1:35). He had many voices around him telling him what to do yet he didn’t give in, but rather sought to re-arrange his schedule to fulfill his primary calling. When Simon came and said, “Everyone is looking for you” Jesus replied, “Let us go elsewhere, into the surrounding villages, so that I can preach there too. For that is what I came out here to do” (Mark 1:36-38). Jesus actually turned down hundreds of good opportunities to serve and heal people. Why? Because if he would have given in to every good thing that came his way, he wouldn’t have made it to the cross. Jesus perfectly managed his time to fulfill his primary calling while abiding deeply in his Father.”

Tyler Zach, ‘Gifts of God.’ Cru Press

This is a challenge to us. We can either choose to spend our time according to our own way or we can surrender unto God and invite him to lead us to the places and situations he desires us to spend time. God desires to be a part of our daily life. He doesn’t desire to solely be an appointment in our calendar but he wants to animate our schedules and bring life into every aspect of our day, especially in time set aside to be with him. He’s the one who said, “Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Read I-by-I, open for discussion, ask questions to direct convo

I've heard it said before that we should strive to "live like Mary in a Martha world." In Luke 10:41-42, Jesus says, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her." The better part Mary chose was sitting at the feet of Jesus and staying attentive to him. In our production and efficiency driven society, fostering a life centered on prayer, the sacraments, and holy leisure is counter-cultural but will be the best investment of our time this side of heaven. How can we center our time on Jesus?

Celebrate every Sunday like its Easter Sunday

Strive to keep the Sabbath holy, as the fourth commandment tells us to do. Every Sunday should bring us back to the day that Jesus rose from the dead. Set aside the day to engage in true recreation, worship, and leisure that will rejuvenate you. Too often we fall into "easy" recreation like watching TV or browsing the internet for hours but these activities all too often exhaust us further. They don't engage who we are, our passions and desires, or hobbies and talents. Sunday is a day set aside to worship the Lord and CELEBRATE life with him and his people.

Know Thyself

Who are you and how did God fashion and create you with your unique gifts, interests, strengths, weaknesses, and talents? Author Dr. Kenneth Boa says, "With a well-developed sense of purpose, shaped by God's Word, all our activities and decisions are brought into alignment with God's purposes so that we can achieve maximum effectiveness with the time and resources God has given us."

Avoid Time-Wasters

Check Appendix 1 to view the most common internal and external time wasters.

Create a Plan of Life or Schedule

Benjamin Franklin said, "If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail!" So learning some basic skills and tactics for planning your time well will help you make the most of the gift God has given you. Besides getting a planner or scheduling system, use the diagram on appendix 2 to help you gauge how time is spent.

TIME WASTERS

7 EXTERNAL | 6 INTERNAL
& HOW TO BEAT THEM

EXTERNAL

Personal Interruptions

Block out long periods of time on the most important things in your life and allow for no interruptions.

Phone Calls and Text Messages

Learn to set a callback time for phone messages. Do not immediately view every incoming text message.

Email Barrages

Schedule two to three times a day to check and respond to emails – and then stick to your rule. Ongoing e-mail work distracts you and keeps you from being productive.

Message Alerts and Phone Ringers

When you work on important projects turn off your phone ringer and message alerts.

Short Attention Spans

Learn to focus. Use instrumental music or white noise to help you quiet your mind while working. Use headphones to block out noise. Sit in areas where you won't be easily distracted.

Social Media

Learn to be proactive in your social media engagement rather than reacting to every comment made on your social media account. Use it as a tool and not as an open door for interruptions.

Your Daily Energy Cycles

Be aware of when you have the most/least amount of energy. Put the most important tasks in your best block of time. Put the least important tasks (email, FB, etc.) in the other blocks.

INTERNAL

Lack of Delegation

Which activities could be done by someone else just as well, if not better?

The “Tyranny of the Urgent”

We are impatient. We think everything needs to be done right now. Good leadership involves learning how to filter e-mails, interruptions, demands, and fun opportunities.

Procrastination

Unpleasant tasks will often be avoided deliberately. Procrastinators usually are prone to interruptions and actually invite them.

Perfectionism

We often spend too much time on projects that result in wasted time, neglecting to spend time on more critical areas.

Lack of Planning

Good leaders must plan ahead. [Scott Thomas] suggests the following blocks of time to plan ahead: Daily (30 min); Weekly (1 hour); Monthly (1/2 day); Quarterly (1 day); Yearly (2-3 days)

Lack of a Gospel Life Plan

This may be the greatest time waster of all, but it is also the easiest to miss. No clear calling, no goals, and no specific steps to accomplish your goals will result in a bad stewardship of time.



THE 4 QUADRANTS

USING YOUR TIME WELL

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	<h2>Q1</h2> <p>CRISES/EMERGENCIES</p> <p>Assignments due tomorrow/today</p>	<h2>Q2</h2> <p>PLAN, PREP, IMPROVE</p> <p>Oil Change Exercise Assignments Catching up with Family</p>
NOT IMPORTANT	<h2>Q3</h2> <p>INTERRUPTIONS</p> <p>Ringing Phone Text Messages Most Emails</p>	<h2>Q4</h2> <p>TIME WASTERS</p> <p>Trivial busy work Surfing the Internet Too much TV</p>

The Four Quadrants were made popular in Stephen Covey's 'The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.'

Everything you do is important or not important, and urgent or not urgent. Often times we do things because we think they're important, when they're really not, but just have an upcoming deadline attached. The 4 Quadrants helps you to focus on doing what's important.

Q1: Fire Fighter These are things that are important and need to be done right now. Assignments that are due very soon are a great example. You didn't do them earlier, so you've got to do them now, except with added stress and decreased quality. Living in Q1 will lead to massive burn out.

Q2: Peaceful Warrior These are things that are important, but don't have a deadline coming up. If you fail to do them in Q2, they will end up in Q1 and stress you out. You want to spend the majority of your time in Q2.

Q3: Just a Sec... These are things we choose to do now, even though they can wait until later. If your phone rings (and it's not the Pope) while you're working on a paper due tomorrow (Q1!) and you pick it up, welcome to Q3. You chose the distraction.

Q4: Busy Doing Nothing These activities waste your time. If you are looking for more time in your schedule, start here and have no mercy.



FULLY ALIVE
A FOCUS GREEK BIBLE STUDY