

Life Coach: Time Management

The Time of Your Life, Part 2

Introduction: The demands of modern American society have put a squeeze on our most valuable resource: time. Few Americans report having more discretionary time today than they did ten years ago. Hectic schedules, multiple demands, and added responsibilities all erode the resource of time—until it appears there is nothing left. Having come to a Biblical understanding of the inherent value of time, it is also vital that Christians develop strategies for stewarding their time.

I. Practice Biblical Principles of Time Management

A. Set Biblical PRIORITIES (Mt. 6:33)

1. The first priority for the Christian is his relationship with God. Although that almost goes without saying, many—perhaps most—would have to admit that God gets the leftovers when it comes to our time.
 - a. Personal, daily time with the Lord should be a high priority for the Christian. This requires setting aside a real block of time for it.
 - b. Church attendance should be set firmly in place each week, with only necessities hindering it. If you don't have time to worship with the people of God, you're far too busy with less important matters.
 - c. Christian service should be a regular event on your calendar. Neglecting active local church service hinders spiritual growth and limits reward in eternity. While everyone is busy, everyone has time for what is important to him.
2. The second priority for the Christian is his spouse.
 - a. Some would argue "family," however that is too general. For married couples, the second most important relationship they enjoy is with their spouse.
 - b. Often the marriage relationship gets relegated to the edges of our schedules. Such actions weaken the relationship by eroding the time necessary to grow together.
3. The third priority for the Christian is his children.
 - a. Children demand time, but they must not become the center of the home. Wives especially must be careful that their husbands do not feel neglected.
 - b. It is vital that parents invest both the quality and incidental time necessary to develop Christian character in their children.
4. The fourth priority for the Christian is his occupation.
 - a. One's job typically takes up the most significant block of his daily schedule. This is how God designed it. Work is an

essential part of human flourishing, both before and after the fall.

- b. Because work demands such a significant time block, it is important to set aside time for the other important priorities without failing in employment responsibilities.
 - 1) Work faithfully when you're supposed to be there.
 - 2) Limit take-home work. It may be necessary at times, but it should not become a habit.
 - 3) If you treat your employment as important, it is likely that the boss will be more lenient when "emergencies" arise. If everything in your life is a "family emergency," you will likely be looking for a new job or will not be promoted in your current position.
 - 4) Develop methods of balancing work life and home life. This differs for each person depending on his situation:
 - a) Identify areas of conflict between home and work.
Example: Work-related cell phone use has become a major issue in some homes. While some may be necessary, limits should be set—especially when it needlessly takes time from the family.
 - b) Find methods to address the areas of conflict. Example: Discipline yourself to ignore the phone when you know it is not a vital communication. The same can be said for texts and emails.
5. The fifth priority for the Christian is other relationships outside the immediate family circle.
 - a. Extended family has a legitimate claim upon some of our time.
 - b. Friendships demand time to foster and grow. Christian friendships provide mutual help, accountability, and support.
 - c. Relationships with other church members, whether friends or not, require some of our time. Ministry always involved a time investment.
6. Practice the "Priority of the Moment" principle:
 - a. Because God has priority in our time, we must set aside time for Him—both corporate worship and private devotion. These times become the priority of the moment.
 - b. When one's spouse has a pressing need, that need becomes the priority of the moment. Other things may be set aside to address that need.
 - c. A deadline at work may be a priority of the moment, taking precedence over some things for a brief period of time.
 - d. The keys to practicing "Priority of the Moment" are flexibility and planning. We must be flexible when surprise demands arise and plan ahead for expected demands.