

# Making the Most of our Time...

*A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest,  
and poverty will come upon you like a robber, and want like an armed man.*

*-- Proverbs 6:11*

If you had a bank that credited your account each morning with R86400 that carried over no balance from day to day, allowed you to keep no cash in your account, and every evening cancelled whatever part of the amount you failed to use during the day, what would you do? Draw out every cent every day, of course, and use it to your advantage! Well, you have such a bank, and its name is TIME! Every morning it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it rules off as lost whatever of this you failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balances, it allows no overdrafts. Each day it opens a new account with you. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back and there is no drawing against tomorrow.

We live in an age of intrusion... every program, every event, every social occasion, every institution makes demands on our time and these demands are growing more intense by the day. If we want to not only survive this world of ever-increasing demands on our time, but also find a way to live an intentional Christian life in it, we will need to learn how to make the best use of our time... how to make the most of the time that we have.

Scripture tells us a great deal about time; right in the beginning Genesis introduces us to the thought that we will not live this life forever. The Psalmist takes that thought further when he describes the span of life as being no more than a vapour, here today and gone tomorrow... life is brief and the time we have is limited. Paul tells the church in Ephesus to make the most of every opportunity, the best use of every moment, because that is what the world needs from us as faithful Christians. Jesus tells us again and again to be careful and watchful, always ready, because we cannot know the time or the hour of His return, so he urges us to use our time wisely and live every moment as if it is our last.

The Scriptures make it absolutely clear that time is one of our most valuable and important commodities, if not the most important. It tells us, therefore, to use it and spend it wisely. But the question remains, how can we do this? What practical things can we do that will help us make the best use of our time? Well, that's where we have to pay careful attention to Proverbs 6:6-11. Here Solomon, the great King of wisdom, gives us some sound advice about how to use our time wisely. Three things stand out in this passage...

Firstly, we need to grow in integrity when it comes to the use of our time. What surprises me most about the issue of time is the fact that we all complain about how short life is, how little time we really have, but then we go on to live as if we have forever and as if there will be no end. And I say 'we' very deliberately, because I think we are ALL guilty of this. And this illustrates a lack of integrity when it comes to the issue of how we use our time.

Secondly, we need to apply discipline to our use of time when it is easy to do so. It is no use trying frantically to order our lives and make better use of our time when we are under pressure and the demands on our time become unbearable... by then it is too late. We need to develop disciplines to help us use our time wisely in the seasons when it is easy to do so. There is a traditional proverb that goes something like this: “We master our minutes, or we become slaves to them; we use time, or time uses us.”

Thirdly, we need to always be on our guard against the great temptation of time, which is to waste just a little bit of it. We often say to ourselves that this or that task can wait just an hour, or that our families won't be too badly impacted if we just stay an extra half-hour at work, or that I can sleep in for just another ten minutes. We are always tempted to waste time, not in measure of days and weeks, but in small portions – an hour here, a few minutes there. And that is how waste gets a foothold and gathers momentum in our lives.

Here are a few questions that might prove helpful in your reflections on the issue of time:

1. What task lies ahead today that is of absolute paramount importance?
2. How will you apportion your time to it?
3. What possible distraction or interruptions can you foresee?
4. How will you go about avoiding these or rejecting them when they come?
5. What can you do to spend an extra hour with your family this week?

### **Prayer:**

Almighty and everlasting God, you are the creator of time and you stand beyond time. To you a thousand years are like a day and a day is like a thousand years. But in your great wisdom you have made us subject to time. You have given each of us a limited amount of time. Forgive us for not always making the most of our time, forgive us for our wastefulness, our lack of discipline and our lack of integrity when it comes to the time you have given us. Help us to make better use of our time. Give us wisdom to know what to do when and what to avoid so that we might become more intentional and faithful to you in how our time is spent. In your name, Lord Jesus Christ, we humbly pray. Amen.

### **Food for Thought:**

The British novelist, Susan Ertz, once said: “Millions long for immortality who do not know what to do with themselves on a rainy Sunday afternoon.”