

MANAGING YOUR TIME

INTRODUCTION

We will turn to Ecclesiastes 3:17:

I thought in my heart, 'God will bring to judgment both the righteous and the wicked, for there will be a time for every activity, a time for every deed.

Now notice that it says here, "God will bring to judgment..." because "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). There is a time to die and a time to marry, but dying while you are getting married is not a good moment. The big part for us believers is not only using our time correctly, but finding out when is the right time to do the right thing. If you had organized a new church twenty years ago you would be sitting in Siberia. That was not a _____ time for it. But if you do not do it now, then I will send you to Siberia! There is a proper time for everything. One of the most difficult things for a sinful human being to find out is: What is God's perfect time?

I. THE SECRET OF TIME MANAGEMENT

A. The secret of time management is self management within a time frame.

How much time do you have? The answer is that everybody has the same amount of time. Is there anybody who is going to get 25 hours today? Is there anybody who is going to get 31 days in February? Nobody has more time than anyone else, yet some people get a lot accomplished and other people are panting all the time. What is the difference? The difference is self management, within a certain time frame.



B. There are two things you must do to be successful:



- 1) You must _____ your work.
- 2) You must _____ your plan.

You already know about making a Weekly Plan. Some of you have already been changing your lifestyle to live according to your new weekly plan. That is good, but more of you need to listen to your own instructions. If you write down Monday evening May 3rd I will paint the bathroom, then Monday evening May 3rd you must obey your calendar and paint the bathroom, whether you want to or not. Maybe you do not feel like it, maybe you are tired, maybe you got delayed a little bit and it is already 8:00pm. But your instructions say, paint the bathroom! You begin with a little bit of adrenalin and you paint the bathroom. You must make a plan and then you must work according to that plan.

C. The secret of time management is managing yourself.

I am not free to do what I want to do. I wanted to go swim in the Dniepr with my family today, but my plan said, "You must be right here at this conference and talk," so I will do this. That is the secret of time management: managing yourself. Giving yourself instructions and obeying those instructions.

D. That is _____ a schedule rather than having the schedule make you.

This is precisely the struggle we are having with time management. We make a plan and then the phone rings, then somebody comes, then you remember something you forgot to do yesterday, then your wife gives you a jar to get some sour cream. Where is your schedule? You made a schedule and now all the other things are trying to make you.

You have to learn to say no to yourself. You have to learn to set priorities, make a little check list. You have to learn to show people your calendar and say, "I would like to help you but I am sorry I cannot." That is why a plan is important. Without a plan you can say, "Maybe I can do this and this." I have met lots of people who plan different activities for the same time. They say, "Well, maybe I can do at least a little bit of this and a little bit of that, and maybe not all of it."

II. UNIQUE PROBLEMS FOR CHRISTIAN LEADERS

A. _____ counseling

If you are an elder, pastor or a choir director, people will come to you with their problems and say, "Can you help me? I do not know what to do?" It takes time, and you need to have time for that. It is an important thing. So you need to learn to make a plan for some of these difficulties.

B. Family Crises in the Church

It may be a severe illness, or it may be an important but unexpected conference. Maybe it is a death. Different things happen that you must take care of.

C. Discipline situations in the CBLT Center

Different disciplinary-type activities in the CBLT Center. Maybe an instructor is doing a poor job or maybe a student is causing a big argument in your church and it affects the reputation of the CBLT Center. So you have to do something about it.

Many of these things are especially related to Christian ministry. If you are a director of a factory or the manager of a bank you just take care of issues at work. Whatever happens with these people at home and in their personal lives you do not care about. But there are unique problems which do exist for Christian leaders and you must take time to take care of them.

III. ORGANIZE THE _____ AND LIMIT THE TIME-WASTERS

A. A lack of a plan is the biggest time waster.

If you learn to do things as a routine, you develop a system by which it goes faster and faster. The biggest time waster is **not** having a plan. So the first thing to do is systematize your lifestyle.

I know for instance that many of your lifestyles are not systematized. One time you are tired and you go to bed at 9:30pm, then another night you feel good and you stay up until 1:00am and you do not have a system. My little boy goes to bed at 8:00pm. My older girl goes to bed at 9:30pm and if she is not in bed and lights out and finished and laying down by 9:45pm there is a problem! If it has to be different, then somebody has to first get permission to have it different.

We have our lifestyle very organized. Some years ago I wanted to visit a school and someone was going to pick me up with the car and I told the driver to be there at 8:00am, not 8:05, but 8:00am. This person told the teachers this and this was the biggest joke of the week for that school because nobody understood what the difference was. To me it was a huge difference.

Let me repeat: "A _____ of a plan is the biggest time waster!"

B. Mail

Let us say the first thing you do every morning is go to the post office and mail a letter. If you do this regularly, then after a few weeks you probably begin to think, "Hmm, maybe I can just do this twice a week instead of everyday." But if you do not do it as a routine then one time you do it at 9:00am and another time you do it at 4:00pm and another day at 12:00pm. You may never begin to think you could organize this. So with all the letters you get:



1. **Let your secretary open, categorize and route the mail.**

I let my wife open all the mail. If I see a letter lying and it is closed I think, "Well, it is not open. It must not be important," and leave it closed.

If I see it a few days later, I think, "Oh three days already, maybe I should read it." So my wife screens the mail, she sorts it out, what is important for me, what is for the children, what is just a magazine and that kind of thing.

2. **Let today's mail set _____ priorities.**

If you open a letter and there are dates you copy the dates in a notebook. You all should have a notebook with a calendar, it does not have to be fancy. Many letters will tell you that there is a meeting or that they want an answer and you write down the date for that.

3. **Read your mail with a Dictaphone in hand, and make your reply as you read.**

To those of you who are going to be leaders very shortly, I want to recommend that you buy a little tape recorder. Read your letter with your recorder in your hand and then record your answer. So you read it and then give your answer right away. You will find you can go through your mail much, much faster. Your wife, secretary or somebody else can listen to it and write it out. Some of you are laughing at this and you are thinking, "That is not a reality for us." But I would be surprised if several of you would not be doing this by very soon. You need to think about the future; you need to plan ahead.

C. Visitors

1. **Visitors by _____ only**

Try to make appointments with people when they can come. As a spiritual leader it is much better for you to organize one evening or one afternoon and invite people to come to you at that time. Now I know that your people are not used to that, but you need to train them, and you can do that real simply. Do not let everybody come but only let people come by special appointment, those who have previously arranged to see you.

Somebody comes to you and they want to have your advice or they want to talk to you about something, so you say, "That is great I would like to talk about that. Could you come tomorrow night, let's see. 8:00pm would be very good." And you are just beginning to teach people about time management. Of course it is not going to happen perfectly right away, but if you do not try it your life will not change. You need to try several different things so your life slowly will begin to change and become better.

2. **Closed door vs. open door policy**

Have a time for visits before and after the church services. Soon all people begin to know that you are free to talk to before the church service or after the church service.

3. **_____ the time of visits.**

The way you do that is, somebody comes to you and you look at your watch and you say, "Ok, somebody else is going to meet me in fifteen minutes so we have about fifteen minutes to talk together." So before you start you set the time limit. You will find that is a wonderful tool.

Usually people do one of two things;

- a) They are afraid to talk about the real problem so they just babble and talk about everything but not about the real thing until maybe twenty minutes later.

- b) Another kind of person gives his problem first and then maybe you can solve it very quickly, but he feels it is too short and that he cannot just get up and leave now, so he says, "What did you think about the weather last week?"

By giving people time limits you help people to concentrate.

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D. The telephone.



1. Do not answer it, let a secretary.

If it is in the office let the secretary answer it. There is a lot of simple information that people need that a secretary can give. You do not have to give that. In a moment will be an illustration to show that many times you do not need to answer the telephone yourself, someone else can do it.

2. Teach your secretary or your wife to _____ the calls.

I am trying to teach my family that.

In our house my son usually answers the telephone. He has many friends, and speaks fluent Ukrainian and Russian, it is very easy. When the telephone rings, he jumps up and I continue my work. It is a good system. It gives me a lot of extra time and it gives him good exercise. It works. You need a system like that also.

3. Make a list of people who can phone and talk to you.

Also make a list of people who should not talk to you but that the secretary can help.

E. Communication with team members

1. Team meetings

The best thing you can have is bi-weekly meetings, that is twice monthly, for your team of course coaches and CBLT Center workers. Everybody must know long ahead of time that there is going to be a meeting. That way everybody can write their ideas and questions down in a notebook so they can be discussed at the meeting.

2. Make up a _____ memo

Use just a small piece of paper. On the top you write, "Note from..." and underneath he writes, "To ...(Anna)..." and then he writes some ideas. Somebody gives it to ...Anna... , Anna turns it over and on the other side she writes, "My answer to..." You will find that you save a tremendous amount of time that way. People understand each other much better when it is written and they can reread it, than when they just hear it once.

3. Availability and privacy

Either be available or not available. Arrange some time when you are available and organize other days that say, "Every Tuesday I do not want to see anybody, I do not want to talk to anybody, that is my private day I want to study for my messages."

In other words you should be totally available to the people sometimes. You are living on this earth in order to help other people, but you do not need to be available for them all the time. You have other things to do. Organize a time when you are going to do special activities and you do not want to be bothered by anybody, but do not allow isolation to develop.

IV. SETTING PRIORITIES

Setting priorities to avoid long range crisis

A. Levels of priority — there are four levels of priority:

- 1) _____ and urgent
- 2) Important but not urgent
- 3) _____ but not important
- 4) Routine

B. Determine to work with these priorities.

It is one thing to sit here at this LTS workshop and say, “yes, yes, yes,” but it is another thing to firmly decide that, “Yes, I am going to follow this system at home.”



C. Working from a checklist.

I can maybe give you some ideas. I often make up checklists. A very simple way is to have a sheet of lined paper with all the things you need to do that day or that week. Whatever you think of you write down. Then later when you do it, you simply check it off. That is a really simple way of doing it.

If you want to make it a bit fancier, which is also of course more helpful, you also write in the day and time to do it. You make four columns, three small ones and one big one. The first column is to check it off, so you leave it blank. The second column is where you write in the date; you may write in May 1st, June 1st, May 13th, May 3rd... etc. The next column you write in the time, if you already know the time to do it. If there is a meeting at 3:00pm then you write in 3:00pm. Then beside this you write what it is you will be doing.

From a list like this you can build a calendar. I have a list like this and at least once a week I go over the list and check off all the things that have been _____ and, the things that have not been accomplished, I write on my next piece of paper and make a new list.

V. WORKING WITH YOUR SECRETARY

Now many of you do not have a secretary, ~~but some of you may have one~~ will have one, maybe several of you will have a secretary in a year or two and so it does not hurt to think about it a little bit.

***Write it down—
don't trust your
memory for
anything!***

A. Trust her. Jokingly we may say SECRET-ARY or SECRET-ASSISTANT.

Treat her with dignity as a worthy person.

She is one of your most valuable assistants. She works quietly in your shadow.

B. _____ with her.

Keep her informed (your attitude is key).

It is a partnership to manage the office. Work with her, not against her.

C. Use her effectively.

Use her, do not abuse her. Use her to her capacity, but do not wear her out. Have reasonable expectations, priorities and workload.

D. _____ her in:

- 1) Chain of Command
- 2) Office functions and procedures
- 3) Policies

- 4) How to represent you
- 5) Who gets through

E. Occasional compliments where due

Compliments (give compliments where and if due). Women thrive on compliments. Many need daily encouragement. Give a secretary a little boost and it will probably affect her performance.

F. Be _____ and up front about her performance

She needs to know if you are dissatisfied with her work so she can improve. (Your attitude towards her work should be very important to her.)

G. Don't be so dependent on her that every thing would fall apart if she were not around. (Sharpen your own pencil or something.)

H. Exercise patience.

Love is patient. 1 Cor. 13:4 So no patience — no — love!

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction. Romans 12:12

Be humble, and gentle, be patient. 1 Thes. 5:14

CONCLUSION

In closing let us review some of the crucial elements of this lecture.

You must plan your work --- and -- — You must work your plan.

Self management is giving yourself instructions and obeying those instructions

You have to learn to say no to yourself. You have to learn to set priorities.

By giving people time limits you help people to concentrate.

Set Priorities to avoid long range crisis:

- Important and urgent
- Important but not urgent
- Urgent but not important
- Routine

Write things down — don't trust your memory for anything!

Love is patient; so be patient in affliction — no patience — no love!

Brothers you do well to practice these points. You do better to include them into your ministry. You do the best if you change your lifestyle. God wants to anoint his servants with beauty. He says "My yoke is easy, my burden is light." God wants to give that to you. He wants to anoint you with such a blessed new lifestyle. Let us praise Him for that. Hallelujah Lord, praise be to your holy name. Thank you. Thank you. Amen.

Blessings to you, our dear friends!

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