

Stewardship: A Way of Life

The Stewardship of Time

Sermon preached by Chris Lofquist

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Introduction

This morning we are going to continue our study on Stewardship. And as we dive into the month of September's theme, we must remember just what a steward is. A **Steward** is **a person who looks after another's possessions**. When we live in community with one another we engage in these relationships all the time. I happen to know for a fact that some of you have been stewards of another's children, as you babysit. If I give something of mine to you, and ask you to *look after it*, then you are a steward of my possession. Whether it be something small, like a pen, or something of great value, like a vehicle, we are engaging in these relationships of stewardship all the time. **James 1:17** tells us that *"Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow."* What we are doing this month is we are specifically looking into the perfect gifts given from our heavenly Father to us when it comes to our time, our treasure, our talents and the Gospel. We have been entrusted, by God, to care for these gifts of His to us. Are we doing a good job of taking care of what He has entrusted us with? Have you ever thought of it that way? Scripture speaks about this relationship of stewardship with God in these areas quite often, and this morning we are going to look at the stewardship of time. Now, when I speak of time I want us to think of it in the terms of life. God has gifted each of us from the moment we are conceived to our final breathe, time on this earth.

Psalm 90:10a – *"As for the days of our life (time), they contain 70 years, or if due to strength, eighty years..."*. When we think of 70-80 years on this earth, we can all agree that this is a lengthy gift from the Lord. In those amount of years we can experience a great deal of life moments – joys, heartaches, celebrations, promotions, demotions, new experiences, old experiences, etc. The gift of time is an amazing thing, and 70 years adds up to 25,550 days, 613,200 hours, 36,792,000 minutes, 2.20152e9 seconds. This is a large gift, and God expects us to care for it, to watch over it, to use it in a certain way. Therefore, the question we have to ask ourselves, when it comes to the stewardship of time, is how are we using that precious time given to us?

But before we get any further let's Pray.

The most logical place to begin this morning, is with our perspective on 'time'.

1. **Our Perspective** (Genesis 1; Job 14:15; Daniel 2:21; 1 Cor. 6:19-20)

Time is something we fight for, we fight to protect it, we hoard it, we get angry when we run out of it, we allow it to control us, and we complain because we never seem to have enough. And I would like to contend with you this morning, that time is not ours. We cannot control it. We are not the creators of time, nor is it ours to own. We are stewards of it, it is God's – He has simply graciously gifted it to us for specific reasons. When it comes to "time", we must change our perspective.

And this proper understanding of time, begins 'in the beginning'.

Genesis 1:1-5. According to these verses, when does time begin? Who created time? This 24-hour day was set in place by God at the beginning of creation. These hours, filled with daylight and the darkness of night, are what enclose each calendar day – and it is these days that cage us in while we grow older. God created time.

Look with me now at **Daniel 2:21.** Now the context of this verse is that King Nebuchadnezzar was troubled by a dream he had, and so he called in all of the wise men, and asked them to not only tell him what his dream was, but also interpret it. This was something that no man could do, so the King made a decree to round up all of the wisemen (Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego along with the others) and have them killed. To this Daniel told the King that he would be able to answer it in the morning. So at night, God gave Daniel a vision that would provide the King with the answers he was looking for. Once Daniel received this vision from the Lord he went to the King and provided him with the dream and interpretation. In so doing, Daniel gave glory to God who was all powerful. He is the God who is in control of the times and seasons. He allows kings and kingdoms to rule under His sovereign control. He is truly the God of time. So, we saw that God created time, back in Genesis, and now we see Daniel, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, proclaim that God sovereignly reigns over time.

What does this tell me? This tells me that time is not our own. We do not own it. We cannot control it. It moves along, whether we want it to or not. And therefore, our lives, which are closed in by time, will only continue as long as the King of time has planned. **James 4:13-14** tells us that our *lives are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away*. No one is promised tomorrow, therefore we must realize that it is the Lord who gives us today and tomorrow - every second of every day is a gift from Him. We are recipients or stewards of this gift of today. Make plans, but prayerfully consider that it is the Lord who gifts you with the time to go here or there.

Furthermore, if we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, then we have placed our lives, our time, to accomplish what He desires through us. Paul puts it this way in **1 Cor. 6:19-20** – “*Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.*” You are not your own, for you have been purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ. As a believer, you owe everything to Jesus, for in His death, He purchased and gave you life - Life for all eternity, no longer prisoner of time, and abundant life in this world held captive by time. Every day, every hour, every minute, every second of your life was purchased by Christ. This should change our perspective on time. We have been gifted today and possibly tomorrow, therefore, we must make every moment count. That is what a good steward of time does. So, from that perspective on time, we must ask ourselves and examine our lives in order to evaluate how we spend our time. If it is a gift from God, given by Christ, to accomplish what He desires, then we are to prioritize those things. Our perspective on time will directly impact our priorities.

2. **Our Priorities** (Colossians 4:5; Ephesians 5:15-21)

Where do we spend our time? God gave it to us, He is the author of it, how do we use it? If you were type that in to a search engine online, you may come across this study. Someone has calculated how a typical lifespan of 70 years is spent. Here is the **average**: Sleep – 23 years (32.9%); Work – 16 years (22.8%); TV – 8 years (11.4%); Eating – 6 years (8.6%); Travel – 6 years (8.6%); Leisure – 4.5 years (6.5%); Illness – 4 years (5.7%); Getting dressed – 2 years (2.8%); Religion – 0.5 years (0.7%). The study did not account for how much time we spend on our phone. The average person spends 5.4 hours a day on their phone, that is 136,080 hours in a lifetime spent looking at a phone. This is where the average human being spends their lives within that 70 years of gifted time. This is why we needed to start with correcting our perspective on time. We spend the time God has gifted us with, for ourselves, as if we own it. However, when our perspective changes, realizing that God owns time, He has gifted it to us, then and only then can we begin to live our lives as stewards of the Master's gift.

So what does God tell us about how we should live our days. **Ephesians 5:15-17.** *“Be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”* Making the most of your time...Redeeming the time. This is the theme of these 3 verses, and this is what we are to seek to do as stewards of time. As godly stewards of time, we are to rise above the wicked days we find ourselves in, and walk in wisdom – and we do this, according to Paul, by understanding *what the will of the Lord is*. So, if you want to redeem the time, if you want to make the most of your days, by making the wise choice and walking according to God's will than you must ask yourself this question, *how can I know and understand God's will?*

1. **Through Reading the Word of God.** Through His Word, God tells us exactly how He desires us to live our lives, and spend our time, and why we should live this way (FYI – it's to our benefit). So **priority #1 with the time God has afforded us, is to seek His will through reading His Word.** How much do you read it? Have you considered the importance of reading it? Studies have shown that on average, we do not spend that much time a day, sitting under God's Word. And I would venture to say, that each one of us must improve in this area, if we want to walk in wisdom redeeming the time.
2. **Through Prayer.** *“If anyone lacks wisdom, let him ask of God who gives liberally.”* (James 1:5). God wants to give us wisdom, He wants us to understand His purposes and plans for our life, for our time, so let's go to Him in prayer – let's spend more time communicating with God.

And when you go to the Lord in prayer and consult His Word, you will see just how important your time in this world is to the glory of God and His purposes. I have said it before, but it must be understood. God desires a relationship with you, and when you spend your days in the beautiful pastures of the Good Shepherd, you begin to take your eyes off of your phone, away from the stresses of your job, and away from your self-interests, and you begin to see what God has placed in front of you – relationships. *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul and mind, and love your neighbor as*

yourself.” Make the most of your time, by spending time with God and by spending time with others. Is there a family member you need to spend more time with, in order to make up for lost time? What have you prioritized above knowing God? Re-organize your priorities, in order to spend your time doing what matters for all eternity.

Conclusion

So, this is where I leave you today.

Think through your life, your activities, how you spend your time...are things out of whack? I would imagine for most of us they are. But they don't have to be any longer. God has graciously given you time, and we don't know if it will be long or short, but we do know that we have it today. Use it wisely. Make that call to a loved one, take the time to have that talk with a spouse or child, open that book, spend some quiet time in prayer, use your time wisely, for *every second* is a precious gift from God.

Let's pray.