

## HOW TO MANAGE YOUR TIME AND SET GOALS

If I asked you if you feel you have enough time in the day to do all that needs to be done, you would most likely say "NO!" But the reality is we only have 24 hours a day - no more, no less. We all have the same amount of time. How will you spend those 24 hours of each day? The way you make your goals and choose your priorities and manage your time will determine the extent to which God can use you. We are going to look at several areas this week concerning time management and goals. Ask God to show you areas where you are not managing your time well and how you can make wise choices in setting priorities.

**Memory verse for the week: Ephesians 5:15-16** (Write it out in your favorite version.)

### DAY 1: SETTING GOALS

#### LOOKING UPWARD

1. It has been said that goals will determine the direction of one's life. Do you agree or disagree with this statement and why?
  
2. I am going to give you an assignment for this week that I want you to begin now and continue for a week. Keep a log in 30 minute increments in a separate notebook or on a piece of paper of how you spend your time this week. Write down what you do every 30 minutes. You may be thinking, this is a waste of my time! But, trust me, if you do this, you will be surprised at how much time you do have and/or how much time you waste. This exercise will show you where you can find extra time to get important things done. Give it a try – I guarantee you it will help you see how you're spending your time. Start today and do it for an entire week. Jot down at the end of the week things you noticed as a result of keeping this log. Are there some areas in which you need to seek improvement?

## LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

### Luke 2:52 (NASB)

"And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

3. This verse gives us a helpful framework from which to make goals. In what four areas did Jesus grow?

4. As Jesus gave us an example to follow, we should grow in these areas also. As you consider each area, write down some goals that you would like to see accomplished this year (or the next 6 months). Pray for wisdom. Make your goals measurable so you can determine how you're doing. Also, make them realistic. Don't set goals that are impossible to reach. Don't rush through this, but prayerfully consider how God is directing you. Take some time in your small groups to share your goals with one another. Ask someone in your small group to hold you accountable and ask about your progress over the year in reaching these goals.

#### **Intellectual (mental):**

(For instance, a goal might be – I want to read one book a month.)

#### **Physical:**

(For instance, a goal might be – I want to exercise for 15 minutes a day at least 3 times a week or I want to eat one balanced meal a day.)

**Spiritual:**

(For instance, a goal might be – I want to spend 15 minutes a day in God’s Word.)

**Social:**

(For instance, a goal might be – I want to have a game night at my house once a month.)

**LOOKING REFLECTIVELY**

- What do you want to do with your life? Or more importantly, what does God want you to do with your life? The way you answer this question will help determine how you spend your minutes, days, and weeks.
- Set long range as well as short range goals. What do you want to be doing in five years?
- Now that you have laid out your goals, it is important that you find time in your calendar to do them. If there is no time, then you shouldn’t make it a goal. Or replace something else in your calendar. For instance, one of my goals (mentally) is to read 15 minutes a day from a book. The best time for me to do that is at night when I get into bed, but I have to adjust my night schedule, so that I get into bed earlier to allow for time to read. Before you put your goals in your schedule, you must first determine your priorities. We will look at this area in tomorrow’s lesson.

## DAY 2: ESTABLISHING PRIORITIES

We all deal with not having enough time to get everything done that we want. We tend to handle time problems in one of two ways. We stop doing things, but that often results in feeling guilty. Or we continue to overdo and overextend ourselves, and that leads to burnout. When we have so many good things we can choose from, how do we choose what to do and when to say no? The most common source of time problems is a lack of priorities (or having the wrong priorities). Setting goals allows you to establish priorities by asking, "What are my most important goals?" The choices facing a Christian regarding which activities to get involved in are far from easy. Oftentimes, you will have to choose between two good activities. For example, if you only have one evening left in the week, should you attend or lead a Bible study, visit someone in the church, or spend time with your family? All are good choices, but you must choose which one is the highest priority.

### LOOKING UPWARD

1. What have you made top priority in your life, as evidenced by your time?

### LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

2. **Matthew 6:33** gives us a major prerequisite to setting godly priorities. "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (NASB95).

What is this prerequisite? Write this verse out in your own words.

3. Why would this be a necessary priority?

### Luke 10:38-42

4. What was Martha's priority? Mary's priority? How did their priorities differ?

5. What was Jesus' perspective on priorities here?

**Luke 10:27**

6. Jesus makes it clear in this verse what our first priority should be – to love the Lord our God. List the four ways we are to love God and what each looks like.

7. How do these four ways of loving God differ?

**LOOKING REFLECTIVELY**

- Seek God's Word for what is important to Him. What were the priorities in His time on this earth?
  
- Consider your gifts. We are to be faithful stewards of the gifts He has entrusted to us. Are your priorities lining up with your gifts?
  
- Determine the "secular" activities over which you have no control. There are some things we must do – we have no choice. Work may be one of those activities. I am single. I have no other source of income, and so work has to be a priority in my schedule in order to earn a living. A certain portion of my time has to be dedicated to this area; it is a non-negotiable. Other examples of necessary secular activities are household chores, grocery shopping, sleeping, eating. They must be done. However, there is a question of how much time we should spend on these activities. Evaluate your time management of these areas.

- How would you order the following priorities in your life in light of Scripture?

Personal relationship to God

Family

Ministry

Vocation

All other activities

## DAY 3: MANAGING YOUR TIME

### LOOKING UPWARD

1. What are the biggest hindrances to spending your time wisely?

### LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD

#### Psalm 90:12 (NASB)

"So teach us to number our days,  
That we may present to You a heart of wisdom."

2. What does it mean to number our days?
3. How would numbering our days help us present a heart of wisdom to God?

#### Ephesians 5:15-16 (NASB)

"Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,  
making the most of your time, because the days are evil."

4. What is the relationship between making the most of your time and the fact that the days are evil?
5. How are you being wise in the use of your time? How are you not making the most of your time?

### LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

"The struggle of the Christian life is really a struggle to maintain the centrality of God in our day-to-day lives." Gary Thomas, *Seeking the Face of God*

- Work on the Time Management Worksheet and calendar on the next three pages.

## TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

**I. List your spiritual gifts and talents.** If you're trying to decide between two things, ask, "Will my gifts be used or lie dormant in such an activity?" 1 Peter 4:10 exhorts us to use our gifts in serving one another. If I'm choosing between two areas in which to spend my time – one that is clearly using my spiritual gifts and one that isn't – I would choose the area that is using my gifts.

**II. Put the activities that are non-negotiable on the weekly schedule.** (Ex. work, mandatory meetings, household chores, laundry, grocery shopping, eating, sleeping, getting ready).

**III. List specific activities under each priority below.**

**1. PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD** (Quiet times, Bible study, weekly worship, reading Christian literature, prayer).

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

**2. FAMILY NEEDS** (Daily time with husband, children, parents, family devotions, weekly family night, other.)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.



**3. MINISTRY ACTIVITIES** (Fellowship events, Bible studies, workshops or seminars, women's ministry events, prayer groups, Sunday School, any area in which you are serving or participating in ministry)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

**4. VOCATIONAL ACTIVITIES** (Travel time to work, time at work, reading for job improvement, other job-related activities)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

**5. ALL OTHER ACTIVITIES** (Washing car, watching TV, reading, working in yard ...)

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.

**IV. Prioritize the activities under each area.**

**V. Determine time demands for each activity (15 min., 30 min., 1 hour?)**

**VI. Put activities on the weekly schedule according to priority.**

**VII. Add the activities you might do if time would ever allow it.**



SCHEDULE FOR  
WEEK OF:

	SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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## **DAY 4: YOUR MANY ROLES**

Let's face it – most of us feel that there is too much to do and not enough time to accomplish it all. There is ministry to be done, careers to pursue, places to go, people to meet with, personal projects and hobbies to undertake, children to raise, family problems to deal with, aging parents to care for – I think you get the idea... Every day we must choose what to do and what not to do. I have heard it said that we live in an age of overchoice. The overabundance of choices overwhelms us. How can we do everything we want to do and feel we should do? The truth is we only have 24 hours a day. That will not change, so we must change the way we manage our time and priorities. Today I want us to look at our many roles as women and ways we can balance these many roles in an effective and fruitful way without burning out.

### **LOOKING UPWARD**

1. Why will God not give you more to do than He knows you can handle? Do you believe this is true? Why or why not?

### **LOOKING TO GOD'S WORD**

#### **Matthew 11:28-30** (NASB95)

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

2. What does Jesus invite us to do? What does He promise?
  
3. What do you learn about Jesus from these verses?
  
4. How have you found rest in your life?
  
5. What does Psalm 127:2 teach us about time management?

## LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

I love the way Matthew 11:28-30 read in the Message: "Come to me. Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me – watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."

6. List the many different tasks, roles, and responsibilities that you are attempting to manage in this season of your life. (For instance, mom, wife, manager, job, etc...)

7. Which roles are highest priorities at this time? (You may want to look back at Day 3.) Are you able to carry them out adequately or are some being neglected because of overwhelming responsibilities in other areas?

We have many roles in life that we have to learn to juggle. I am a daughter, a sister, a friend, a discipler, a caretaker of my home, a director of women's ministry, a teammate of my pastors... I need to determine what is highest priority today and focus on the responsibilities of that role. Friday is my "day off" from the church, so I try to focus on my role of managing my home on Friday – running errands, taking care of the house, buying groceries and household items, etc. But I also try to make my role as a daughter a priority that day – I make a point to go visit my mom and take her out to eat on Fridays. My other roles are not at the top of my list on Fridays, although I do spend time working in those roles on Fridays – just not as much.

8. What are some activities you use (or have used) as stress-relievers in your life?

9. In light of this study and verses such as Matthew 11:28-30, are you comfortable with these "activities"? Are there other activities or means to relieve stress that you might find more appropriate and satisfying? Make sure you have time to implement these stress-relievers.
10. What are some ways you receive emotional support? Meeting with certain people? Going to a certain place? Doing a specific activity? Spending time with the Lord in His Word? Worshipping Him in song? Praying?
11. Are there any changes you can make to reduce your stress level?

## DAY 5: PRIORITIZING YOUR TIME

### LOOKING UPWARD

1. How do you handle the “tyranny of the urgent”?

### LOOKING TO GOD’S WORD

In **Psalm 39:4-5**, David prayed, “LORD, make me to know my end and what is the extent of my days; Let me know how transient I am. Behold, You have made my days as handbreadths, and my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere breath.” (NASB 95)

2. How would knowing our transience and the extent of our days help us to manage our time wisely?
3. What principles for the way you spend your time on this earth can you derive from **Luke 12:35-40 (ESV)**?

“Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”

### LOOKING REFLECTIVELY

This week I have tried to give you tools to help you think through goals, priorities, and time management. Here is one other tool you may find helpful. Fill in the boxes below with activities and things on your “to-do” list. Determine which quadrant they go in. The things you put in the upper left hand quadrant are top priority – they are important and urgent. Prioritize the things within each quadrant.



	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT		
NOT IMPORTANT		

- Ask the Lord for wisdom as you set priorities and goals. Ask Him to show you what is most important. Entrust it to His care. He will give you enough time to do the things He has called you to do.

Meditate on 1 Thessalonians 5:24 (NASB 95): "Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass." What does this mean to you personally?