

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JUNE 22ND-23RD, 2019 // THE FUNDAMENTALS

PRIORITIES

WE ALL HAVE THE SAME AMOUNT OF TIME

We tend to look at people who are more successful, educated, spiritual, or “happy” and say, “If I just had the time to do that...” The truth is that **we all have 24 hours in a day, it is what we choose to do with that time that increases or decreases the success, education, or spiritual growth in our lives.**

THE WSJ DID A STUDY ON TIME MANAGEMENT

8.5 hours a day personal care (mostly sleep), 8.12 hours working, **3.34 hours T.V., phone, other leisure**, 1.8 hours eating, 1.1 hours doing chores, 0.55 hours shopping, 0.46 hours helping family, **0.14 hours doing civic/religious activity**

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

God is not ridiculous with His expectations of us. The Lord knows we have to sleep, work, eat, hang out with family, and take time for ourselves, but **what God asks is for us to put Him above these things, so we can do these things better! It boils down to trusting God to lead us and provide what we need.**

SO, WE MUST ASK OURSELVES THE BIG QUESTION

What is truly important to us? Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, your heart will be also.” This means that **where we put our time, money, and energy exposes what we really value. The question isn’t, “How much time do we have?,” but “What do we want to invest in during that time?”**

STEP 1: THE CHURCH

THE NEW YORK TIMES ON CHURCH ATTENDANCE

T.M. Luhrmann wrote, “ONE of the most striking scientific discoveries...is that going to church weekly is good for you. Attendance boosts the immune system and decreases blood pressure. It may add 2 or 3 years to your life. The reason for this is not entirely clear.”

- Coming to church is not about living longer per say, but you get the point.

“I CAN FOLLOW CHRIST AND NOT ATTEND CHURCH”

This is the age old American mantra that we don’t need church to avidly follow Jesus. **This is not supported anywhere in the Bible.** In fact, the Bible is quite clear that attending church is vital to our spiritual growth.

- Eph. 4, Col. 3, Acts 2 and 9, Matt. 16, and many others show the importance of church. Heb. 10 may be the clearest.

THERE IS ALMOST ALWAYS A CONNECTION

Lack of church attendance and personal struggles almost always go hand-in-hand. **People that don’t make weekly attendance a priority, often find themselves in times of loneliness and struggles.**

- That doesn’t mean coming to church insulates us from struggles. It means we have help when those times hit!

DON’T WAIT TO BE GOOD

Church is not for people who are perfect. Jesus said, “I didn’t come for the healthy, but for the sick.” We all need sanctuary time! **Even if you are struggling and doing awful things, be here! Coming into an environment of worship, fellowship, safety, and positivity is good for all of us!**

STEP 2: PRAY

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN STUDY ON PRAYER

In 2010 UW sociologists wrote, “Those who choose to pray find comfort during hard times. The 75 percent of people who pray on a weekly basis are **able to manage a range of negative situations and emotions – illness, sadness, trauma and anger**, but how they find relief has gone unconsidered by researchers.”

WHY SHOULD THE CHRISTIAN PRAY?

We are in a relationship with God. Healthy relationships have frequent communication, prayer is our time to confess and find comfort in speaking to our Father, prayer humbles us because we remember Who is in control, prayer is how we ask God for help in times of need (Matt. 26:41), prayer is our way of interceding for others and by praying and learning to listen to God, we start to also learn His will for us.

WE MUST PRAY WITH THE RIGHT ATTITUDE / MOTIVES

We’re to pray **God’s will** (Lk. 26:42) with **proper motives** (Js. 4:3) and with **humility**. **We aren’t petitioning Santa, we are seeking God’s guidance.**

PRACTICAL WAYS TO BUILD A PRAYER LIFE

- Pray out loud, pray with intentionality: write out prayers and follow the model of the Lord’s prayer. **1. Praise 2. Repent 3. Others 4. Yourself.** Schedule time and pray casually during the day, journal prayers and see what God answers over time, and live righteously.

STEP 3: READ

THIS BOOK IS THE MIND OF GOD ON PAPER

One cannot even begin to communicate the importance of reading the Bible. It’s not only the “inspired word of God,” it’s intended to shape how we live by “teaching, rebuking, and training” us (2 Tim. 3:16).

- **The Bible is the story of mankind’s relationship to God and it holds the keys to living in harmony with Him.**

YES, IT IS A DENSE AND INTIMIDATING BOOK!

The mind of God written down as a literary work should be a little intimidating. That shouldn’t keep us from diving into the Word.

- **Start small, but keep chewing.** If you’re a new Christian start in Matthew then skip to Acts and continue through the NT. If you’re brave, start in Genesis, but skim Leviticus and Numbers.

FIND A BIBLE THAT WORKS FOR YOU

Besides heretical cults (Mormons and Jehovah’s Witness), almost every translation communicates the exact same message. **Find a translation that works for you and read it.**

- Invest in a good study Bible, get a reading plan from YouVersion, listen to it on CD or an app on your commute.

STEP 4: COMMUNITY

WE WERE NOT MEANT TO DO THIS ALONE

God is communal in nature (the Trinity), and we are made in His image. All throughout the Bible we see people “doing life” with other people. Even Jesus had His “small group.”

- **Small groups that intentionally meet on a regular basis foster confession, encouragement, attract the Holy Spirit, and deepen love and empathy.**

THIS CAN BE OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL

Community can come through LifeGroups, HomeGroups, serving groups, Celebrate Recovery, or it can come through people just casually meeting in homes and coffee shops with no agenda.

- **The point is accountability and transparency. WE MUST BEAR EACH OTHER’S BURDENS!**

GROWTH IS GOOD!

Many look to the assembly time for community, but this isn’t biblical. The assembling together is for teaching, worship and communion. Small groups are designed for deep personal relationships outside of the weekend service.

- **The church should be getting bigger, but in a healthy church intentional community becomes even more vital!**

STEP 5: GIVE BACK

PSYCHOLOGY TODAY THINKS GIVING IS VITAL

Dr. Rick Hansen wrote in 2013, “At this time in human history when people feel increasingly stressed and isolated, when relationships stand on shaky ground, and when international conflicts are fueled by dwindling resources, **benevolence is not just moral, it’s essential.**”

CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED BY GOD TO GIVE

A constant in the OT and NT is giving. Giving comes in several ways: through **works, time, financially**, and through our **talents/giftings**.

- We are called to be stewards of the resources God has given us. **This shouldn’t be a legalistic or socialist mandate, but a natural reaction of a saved soul.**

PRACTICAL WAYS TO GIVE BACK

Good works: Intentionally be kind to people. Tip well, buy someone coffee, cut your neighbor’s yard, or buy the office donuts. **Time:** Volunteer at church, school, or non-profit. **Financially:** Give to the church and to a non-profit you believe in. **Talents:** Use your gifts to bless others, but be careful that it isn’t about you.

THE MARATHON

- Regardless of what’s happening in life, **come to church** consistently!
- **Pray** on a daily basis.
- **Read** small chunks of **the Bible** on a consistent basis.
- Find a small group to **build community**.
- **Give back** to God and others

ON PURPOSE

- We will only grow closer to God if we build a relationship **on purpose!** We must be **intentional** with our lives!
- **We will get out of this what we put into it.** If our dedication is mediocre at best, our lives will be mediocre at best.