



Managing GOD's Money

THE LEVEL PLAYING FIELD: 24 HOURS EACH DAY

Busy and Ineffective

We are a busy people, convinced there just isn't enough time to do what we know we need to do. We have so much to take care of at home, in the office, and at church! When will we be able to relax and get on top of everything? These are major concerns today especially for single parents. Yet, everyone has the same 24 hours each day to work with! So, what's the problem?

Perhaps if we took a step back and studied ourselves in the mirror, soon we would realize we have more than enough time to do God's will, which is the central issue. Rather than trying to reach our goals, maybe it's time to ask Jesus what He wants us to do, and by when. Perhaps, just trusting Him to guide us throughout each day might be the best prescription for today (Psalm 115:11)!

Jesus' visit to Mary and Martha captured in Luke 10:38-42 provides insight into our plight:

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up *to Him* and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Don't miss the *pearl* in verse 42: 'Mary has chosen....' Did you get that? Today we don't stop to ask God to help us choose what's important to Him. We rush ahead 'doing' stuff rather than just 'being' still and listening to His voice! Jesus reminds Martha 'only one thing is needed.' Mary chose to sit at Jesus' feet to listen to Him—she chose to 'be' rather than to 'do'. The first providing last value while the second often entails rushing about fixing a meal or creating something else. I'm not suggesting preparing meals and related actions are not important; I am merely saying we must seek to know God's priorities as we go about our daily tasks. Indeed, there is a time to act and a time to be still as Solomon reminds us in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

Stewardship of God's Time

Stewardship of God's time need to become a way of life; not just a fad we practice after listening to a sermon or after reading the latest best-selling book.

Asking God each morning to control our agendas and to show us how to bring Him honor and glory daily should become as natural as breathing. So investing time praying and listening to Jesus ought to be central, daily.

Let's peek into Jesus' life to see what we can glean. Was He too busy to do His Father's will? To heal the sick, restore sight to the blind, or perform other ministry to the multitudes? On the contrary, Luke 5:16 is a powerful message to each believer who claims he doesn't have time to invest with Jesus: ***But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.***

We do not have to withdraw to lonely places to pray, although sometimes it helps to go there. But when no such places are readily available, we should pray wherever we are—not only when we meet problems, but regularly as a way of life. This will enable us to identify His priorities to allow us to do His will in available time.

Do you agree there is no shortage of time to do God's will? God, the Creator of the Universe, owns everything and has allowed us to use talents He has given us daily in time available, to reach His objectives (2 Peter 1:3-4). Our challenge is to seek to know these goals!

Seldom do we invest time praying and seeking God's guidance at the start of our day. Instead, time and again, we spend time worrying about decisions, which leads to us becoming stymied, losing sleep, underperforming at our jobs, using more time than reasonable to finish task, and sometimes becoming ill. We fret about losing our job, changing jobs, our children's behavior, attending a meeting, and so much more. Going to Jesus first is crucial to releasing time to perform important tasks daily; this is how we cast our cares onto Him as He requests, and not become preoccupied with our circumstances (Matthew 11:28)!

Before Jesus' major decisions, He invested much time praying; shouldn't we do the same? On the eve of selecting His twelve apostles, Jesus withdrew and prayed all-night. Listen to Luke 6:12-13:

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles:

Stewardship of God's time entails knowing when to invest time *sitting at His feet*, and when to get on with the task. It involves unwavering focus on Jesus and away from people, time, and circumstances. Often, we believers in Jesus are so motivated to serve Him that we become busy on committees in church and elsewhere, and *majoring on minors* bogs us down; then unwittingly the procedures turns into the primary goal! Meanwhile, we miss the person crying out for someone to pray with or just to listen to his or her many challenges. I've been there, have you?

We can be Good Samaritans only if we choose to concentrate on Jesus and His priorities and stop hurrying. Constantly dashing about distracts us from everything and everybody but the central task on which we are working. So, the methods become supreme and unwittingly it grows into our god. Heed Jesus' advice and do as Mary did—sit at Jesus' feet regularly and listen!

It's a Level Playing Field

It's a level playing field! Each of us has access to the same time daily, 24 hours, and we can't "manage" these hours! So time management is a misnomer. We need to ponder instead, how to manage our affairs.

Stewardship of time means working with priorities daily, and learning to select the *important* over the *urgent*. Martha chose to tackle the *urgent* while Mary chose the *important*. We must choose daily. But how?

Get to know the Creator and Owner of everything, Jesus Christ, as Lord and Savior. He will be able to guide you with your selection because His preferences for you are best. Will you start to work with His goals for you today?

Decide today to seek to know His priorities for your life. Ask Him to show you the special gifts He has prepared for you, and how to use them daily to advance His Kingdom.

Let's stop our total emphasis on tasks ('doing'). Ask God to show us His balance between tasks ('doing'), and *sitting at His feet* and learning ('being')!

Slow down, ***you can do everything God has called you to do***, but only in His time. Learn to withdraw and pray to your Heavenly Father regularly; dare to become *a man after God's own heart* and do everything He wants you to do (Acts 13:22)!

Are you ready to give an accounting of your use of available time? Track how you use your time this week and ask the Lord to show you His best for you.