

Making The Most of Time

As we travel through time, we marvel. We marvel at what was accomplished and perhaps regret what was not done. We mark our time by years, months, weeks, and days. The Bible teaches us: *"So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom"* (Psalm 90:12). Every new year, there is a natural tendency to see where we've been, where we are and where we'd like to be going. As I see the Scripture in Psalm 90:12 we are being told by God to estimate the time left and make the most of it. Time, like money can be invested or wasted. Here's a New Year's list of things that waste time followed by a list of things that are valuable and allow us to invest time:

Things That Waste Time:

1. Entertainment That Does Not Edify

If you find yourself in the middle of a book, television program, video game or internet surfing that is taking you nowhere but down, put it down, before it puts you down. *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (I Corinthians 10:31).

2. Work That Requires No Work

Nothing seems to tire us out faster than preoccupation with work that has little or no effort invested. One of the oft-heard statements that follows someone saying how busy they have been at their job, is "But the day has gone by fast!" *"He also that is slothful in his work is brother to him that is a great waster"* (Proverbs 18:9). Hard work makes the most of time and takes out the boredom.

3. Fellowship With Complainers

An old saying says we can curse the darkness or light a candle. The fellowship of "darkness cursers" cannot only be depressing; it can be terribly non-productive. Those full of complaints rarely have anything constructive to say. I like the words of the late, Dr. B.R. Lakin who expressed how he disassociated himself from a group that was not helping him along. He said, "I just mounted my horse, tipped my hat and rode into the sunset." In other words, don't join the nere-do-well crowd by joining in their diatribe; stay sweet and ride kindly into a new horizon! *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt..."* (Colossians 4:6).

Things That Invest Time:

1. A Good Witness for Our Lord

"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so..." (Psalm 107:2). Being a verbal witness for Christ is important. Any relationship that doesn't, at times, express itself verbally is not healthy. A man who loves his wife will speak of her. A child who loves the parent will praise them for their influence. So also, the son and daughter of God will speak up about the Lord. Be looking for opportunities when God opens the door for you to say something for the Lord. If you are looking for the opportunities, they will come. If you take the opportunity, blessings will follow. *"Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days"* (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

2. Reading That Elevates Your Thoughts and Actions

As Paul was soon to die he requested, *"...when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books..."* (II Timothy 4:13). In the time Paul had left on this earth, he was letting Timothy know that he did not want to waste it by not taking advantage of time to read. Alan Bloom said, "The failure to read good books both enfeebles the vision and strengthens our most fatal tendency--the belief that the here and now is all there is." We need the help of sages and ages. C.S. Lewis said: "We read to know we are not alone." Reading solicits the help of strugglers who have overcome. *"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up"* (Ecclesiastes 4: 9,10).

3. Prayer

Time spent in the secret place is investment in eternity. *"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty"* (Psalm 91:1). Prayer changes things and prayer changes people. We can study prayer, but it is best learned like learning to ride a bicycle. You must take the risk to get up on two wheels and keep moving until you find your balance. And once you find your balance, you'll be able to ride for the rest of your life. Once you learn to pray by praying you will be able to contact God for the rest of your life.

As we begin this New Year, pray and read, especially the Bible. Let God navigate your soul, until He notifies you through His Word and prayer any new direction you need to go or any old direction you need to pursue. *"And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left"* (Isaiah 30:21)

- Pastor Pope -

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