

## THE VISION FOR LIFE PODCAST

Episode 98 | VFL Reads: Redeeming Your Time, Part 2

Featuring: Autumn Gardner and Hunter Beaumont



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**Autumn:** Welcome to the Vision for Life podcast, an ongoing conversation between the pastors of Fellowship Denver and the church at large. Each week we talk about life, faith, the Bible, and how to follow Jesus as we go about our daily lives. I'm Autumn, host of the Vision for Life podcast, and Hunter is joining me once again. We're picking up part two of a conversation that we started last week. Hunter, so glad you're here with me. I just want to tell our listeners that in an unexpected turn of events you showed up wearing a pink shirt and I'm wearing a black polo. It's very odd for all of us, but we'll muddle through.

**Hunter:** We have shifted to fall. Now, I put on my long sleeves, and you put on your dark colors.

**Autumn:** There we go. So, I hope you're feeling good about all of our wardrobe choices for the day. We are continuing a discussion that we started in an episode that aired right before this one on a book by Jordan Raynor that is called *Redeeming Your Time: 7 Biblical Principles for Being Purposeful, Present & Wildly Productive*. Would you recap the book itself and then our discussion last week so we can jump in with picking up part two of our conversation?

**Hunter:** Yeah, we said last week we really liked this book because it helps us think about how to live out our days and our weeks and our months in a way that prioritizes the kingdom of God and actually gives ourselves to the things that are most important in our lives that God has called us to give ourselves to. And one of the reasons I particularly enjoyed this book is that Jordan Raynor integrates several different authors who I've learned from over the years in the realms of time management, productivity, project management, these kinds of things. And so, he integrates authors like David Allen, who has authored a system called *Getting Things Done*, and that's one I would recommend to all of our listeners. Cal Newport, who has written a book called *Digital Minimalism*, who's also written a book on deep work which we'll talk a bit more about today. He integrates Christian authors like John Mark Comer, who's one our listeners might be familiar with, who wrote a great little book a couple of years ago called *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. But one of the things that Jordan Raynor does is you don't have to go read all those books. You can actually just read this one book, and you've got the main ideas from a lot of those books. And I think he's done a very capable job of not only summarizing the principles in those books but then he gives lots of practical examples that he just calls practices that he's developed in his own life where he's integrated these things into his own life. And he presents his practices in a way that's not overly heavy-handed or dogmatic. So, it's not like you *have* to do this, and you *have* to do this, you *have* to do this. That can be I think one of the downsides of reading a book like this is you think, ah, I've got this whole system I've got to go implement, it's way too much. But he presents this in a, the principles are important but the practices are suggestions, kind of way that I just found really thought-provoking.

**Autumn:** In looking at principles one through four in our first conversation, you said that the unifying theme in those was this idea of being purposeful. So, could you briefly walk us through what those four were and where we're going to pick up with principle number five?

**Hunter:** Yes. He has seven principles in the book, and for purposes of our conversation, we wanted to have two different episodes about this book. And so, we focused on principles one through four in our previous conversation. Today we're going to do five, six, and seven. But the reason we broke it down that way is that we thought—and this was just us kind of interpreting the book through our own reading of it—but we thought the first four principles were really about how to be purposeful. They said you start with God in His Word, so you spend time with God every day, which is something we've talked a lot about on this podcast, how to Pray, we did a series on prayer, we've done a series on daily life with

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God, so we love that he started there. You spend time with God and then you have a way where you collect all the things that are coming your way. Some of them are coming out of your own head like you're just dreaming up ideas and some of them are coming out from outside of you. There are messages or demands that are being placed on you and you have a way to collect all of those things and a way to periodically review all the things you've collected and you decide what you're going to say yes to so you don't have to say yes to everything. Then the third principle, he called it dissent from the kingdom of noise, which means you need to get some distance from all the ways our world, through social media, through technology, through text messages and emails, just bombard you with messages. You need a way to get some distance from that so that you can be somewhat reflective and not constantly drawn in every direction that's demanding your attention to where your days in your mind, in your heart, in your soul are just fragmented. And then his last principle that we talked about last week was to prioritize your yeses. So, if you've spent time with God and you're clear on what he's called you to and what His Word says, and that's the filter through which you're living your whole life, and you're collecting all the things that are coming your way, and you've quieted down the noise a little bit, you're able to step back and say, okay, all the things that are coming my way, not only what should I say yes to, but what are the most important things to give myself to in this next season of life? Whether it be this week or we talked last week about the discipline of setting quarterly goals for the next three months or so. My summary of all of that was this is really about what he calls being purposeful, or what we might call setting priorities. If you work that system, I think you'll also be productive. But I thought the main emphasis of those first four chapters was on prioritization.

**Autumn:** So, if the simple summary of those first four chapters is being purposeful, do these next three principles, five, six, and seven, similarly have a simple summary?

**Hunter:** Yeah, I think these last three chapters are about being productive and present. And so, the three principles he's going to present us here are saying, if you're clear on what it is you should be giving yourself to, how do you build rhythms in your day—primarily in your day, but also in your week—where you can actually give yourself to and get those things done that you're supposed to do? And while staying present to the important people and present to God in His work in your life. So, I think these last three are presence and productivity.

**Autumn:** This unified idea in these last three that you and I discussed that I'm excited to talk about because it's been really a meaningful realization in my life and work over the last few years, is this idea. So, there's this big idea that runs through these is your summary and mine, Hunter, that we talked about together. This is not necessarily Jordan Raynor's words, but the big idea running through these is that we can cultivate our capacity as an individual to be present where we are and to integrate practices that maximize our time and our presence, so allow us to be present in those important places and with the people who we've prioritized. In my own time on staff here at Fellowship, I stepped into a role that really wasn't developed, which is similar to a lot of people who take a job in ministry, and then with the church grew a children's ministry and then began to oversee more people, began to oversee more things at Fellowship Denver. And so, this idea of growing your capacity, growing your leadership capacity, cultivating this ability to be present with different people in different places, it's been something that just that realization that I could do, that I could grow my capacity. The idea that I could grow my capacity to do those things was an exciting realization when I first learned it. And then being able to put time and effort towards that and to see then how this trajectory has gone in the last few years in my own life is exciting and really something that I can look back on and see both people who were really meaningful in helping me learn about it, books that I read that were helpful, and really, ultimately seeing that God has done this in me, that He has given me the ability to understand that I can grow my capacity and then work to actually do that.

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**Hunter:** You are a living testimony to the power of this, and you have done exactly what you described. And to just fill out some of that for our listener's sake, when Autumn started on our team, Children's and Family Ministry did exist, but it existed in a very simple form. And that ministry grew over the years, primarily because the church was growing and more people were coming from outside the church, and people that were in the church were having children. And so, this ministry grew in size. Now, what's fascinating is you also had some vision for that ministry that was beyond where we were. So, it wasn't just about, how do we take care of more kids on Sunday? But it was also about how do we strategically develop a whole ministry curriculum and program on Sunday morning to ask, what do we want to impart to these kids at a key stage of their life? So, you want to do that. You also want to equip families to raise their children well. So, it was Children and Family Ministries, and you had some vision for family ministry that we didn't even express at all. So, we got to watch you do all of that. As more kids are coming to the church and as more people are having kids, not only did you keep up with the growth, but you actually expanded the intentionality and the scope of the ministry. Okay, then when you got that done-

**Autumn:** It's not done!

**Hunter:** Well, this is the fascinating thing, then you added—you became—director of our internship program, which was completely not on your job description, but you were like, you have a passion for developing leaders, and you organized a fantastic internship program that's also grown in capacity. We started with two interns a year. Now we do six a year. So, you've done that. Then when you kind of got that done, you're like, well, what else can I do? And I was like, hey, why don't we start a podcast? So here we are. This podcast is happening because Autumn, the host, has grown her capacity over the years. So, you're a phenomenal testimony to the power of this.

**Autumn:** Well, having so many—thank you, H—but having so many truly wonderful coworkers, I've picked up on different practices over the years that they utilize that allow them to work really well in a certain way. So, working with so many people at our team, I can watch a certain skill that they have and that they execute really well, and then I've tried to learn from them and integrate some of those things. And some of these practices that Jordan Raynor talks about in his book have been incredibly helpful for me to that end. But just that realization, because there are moments not all of that was seamless. You described it so nicely.

**Hunter:** Looked seamless to me. All of that was seamless. You were like a duck on top of the water, just gliding. That's all I saw. I just saw a duck guiding across the water.

**Autumn:** There are moments for all of us, adding in a new baby to your family, or taking on a new job, or going through a job transition, or becoming an empty nester, or the seasons of transition that demand different things of us and our time. Really, I think at times we can feel like we don't know what is expected of us in a certain season or what might be expected. We're not sure if we're up to the task. But in this realization that God will allow us to grow our capacity and we can ask Him to help us do that within this acknowledgement of our limitations. Even though I've been able to do a lot of different things at Fellowship, I more readily acknowledge my limitations today than I did, say, six years ago, which is incredibly helpful. And that has been a really wonderful area of growth for me. So that if you're listening to this and you're thinking, all of this sounds wonderful for you who sit in an office to go do, just be encouraged by this idea that you can cultivate this capacity and grow this capacity. It does take some intentional thought and effort and work, but talk to God about it if you have that desire. Start there. Just like we said in this episode, start there.

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**Hunter:** And I would put a plug in for reading this book in a prayerful and reflective way. I mentioned last week I took it on vacation with me and I read most of the book on the flight to vacation. And then my mom and dad picked me up at the airport and we were driving like three hours to where we were staying, and I finished the book in the back of their car while my dad was driving. I just became a kid again and let my dad drive. And I sat in the back and read a book over the course of about a three-hour flight and a three-hour drive and just piecing that together. I read this book, and as I read it, I made some notes of things I needed to think about. And then I spent the next week revisiting my notes and revisiting kind of the key sections of the book and asking how would I integrate this into my life. And I came back from vacation and started making some changes in my daily rhythms that I've been implementing ever since. So, I think it's really helpful to do this when you have just a little bit of capacity to reflect on what you're reading so that you're not just like, yeah, I read that, but you actually have some time to ask, how would I integrate this?

**Autumn:** Well, let's look at the next three principles, principles five, six and seven.

**Hunter:** Principle five is to "accept your unipresence." And he's just opposed that to omnipresence, which is what? God is everywhere. So, I actually like the point he's making, even with this funny, funny word.

**Autumn:** And this is a point of contention.

**Hunter:** This was. We said last week we didn't like the Christianification of this book so much, but this is the one part that I did like it, and you were like, 'That's cheesy.'

**Autumn:** I said it feels like a stretch.

**Hunter:** And I'm like, give me the cheese. I thought it was so helpful. He's making the point that God is everywhere at once. And the reason I thought that was a great point is I think one of the temptations of technology is to make us think that we can do more and be more places at once than we really can be. And so, we literally cannot be present more than one place at a time. And we can't really focus on more than one thing at a time. Multitasking is really not that effective. This, to me, was like, hey, remember, you are not God—you are a human being. And because you're a human being, you have to learn how to focus and you have to accept your limitation. And there's actually freedom when you accept that limitation because you might now actually give yourself to the things that are most important.

**Autumn:** I think that the insight, to be clear, I think that insight that you just shared is really good and something I need to recognize. I just thought the term unipresence was a little bit of a stretch.

**Hunter:** Well, semantically, it's close to unibrow, and we all know that that has really bad connotations. It's very unattractive, and it's a problem that needs to be dealt with. And so, you're like, no, unipresence is good, but it sounds like unibrow, so I don't know what to do.

**Autumn:** Hmm, Okay, well-

**Hunter:** I think I dove into your psyche and figured out the problem.

**Autumn:** Yeah, I don't think so. But, were there any practices within this section that you wanted to mention, Hunter, or that are helpful to you?

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**Hunter:** This is the section of the book where he summarizes some work an author named Cal Newport has done on deep work. And deep work is the kind of work that takes focus and attention. And we all have things that can only be done with some time, some blocks of time where we can really just give ourselves exclusively to that and we're free from distraction. One of the obvious examples for me is writing a sermon. I can't write a sermon while I'm simultaneously clicking over and checking email every five minutes and stuff. I won't make any progress on the sermon, and then I'll get stressed out about the sermon not being done. I can't write a sermon while a college football game is on either. I'll be distracted by the football game or the baseball game, whatever is on the TV. So, sermon writing for me takes focus. It takes prayerful, meditative reflection, and then it takes actually- I actually write sermons out, that's how I know I'm done. So, it takes crafting words. That's deep work. That's an example of deep work. Anything that you're creating, or it could even be an email you're responding to but it's not a quick response, you need thought. You need to give thought to anything you're creating or crafting. You have to think, this is deep work. And Cal Newport has written a lot about that. He summarizes his work here, and one of his practices is schedule deep work appointments with yourself. Meaning you actually block out time on your calendar. You schedule an appointment with yourself for deep work and preferably you even identify what the thing is you're going to work on during that deep work segment. That's a takeaway that I've taken from this and begun to implement into my own daily rhythms.

**Autumn:** I'm going to digress for just a moment into a personal observation I had about the book. I really appreciate this section. And similarly, Hunter, scheduling blocks of time, holding blocks of time on my schedule for some hours each week for that type of work has been a practice that I've only integrated in the last couple of years. But that is really helpful. But it's clear from my perspective, it was clear to me reading through the book, that Jordan Raynor's primary work is not caring for small children. So, if you are a mom listening to this and wonder how on earth any of this actually applies to you, I understand that. So, if you were to pick up this book and read through it, he is not suggesting a time management system or way to be productive if your primary work is managing a household. So, if that's what the majority of your time is going to right now, perhaps raising children or homeschooling children or managing your home, then some of these things don't fit as neatly. Some of his suggested practices don't fit as neatly. So, there's an author who many of you many moms—shout out to you if you're listening to this—will be familiar with. Her name is Kendra Adachi. She has a book and a podcast and an Instagram presence called *The Lazy Genius Way*. Interestingly, what I thought about when I was reading this section was that some of her suggestions about managing household chores are similar in some ways to what he's pointing out about these deep work sections in that you're taking on one specific task. So, it might be meal prep, and for two to three hours you have blocked out your schedule. You will still be interrupted, your kids are still around, but what you're focused on during that time is that task. And so, some of the suggestions that she offers are very similar in nature to some of the practical suggestions that Jordan Raynor is offering in his book. So, take that, if you read this book, read it with a grain of salt. I know that you can see how it would much more readily be implemented if you had an office job or a job that allowed you to control your schedule, say. Even so, some of these principles can be adapted and very helpful.

**Autumn:** And the underlying observation he makes is you can only be and focus on and do one thing at a time. So, even to use the example you used, if you know you're going to get interrupted by your kids or whatever over the course of a couple of hours, you could still say, 'When they're not interrupting me, I'm going to do this one thing,' right? And most of the deep work blocks that he recommends are how long?

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**Autumn:** One and a half. His personal example is about one and a half hours, or, even if he returns to it, he says he usually takes a short break at that one-and-a-half-hour mark, maybe have a three-hour block.

**Hunter:** That was one of the key takeaways for me. I actually block out two days a week for where I keep my calendar free of appointments so that I can work on things that I have to work on. And then the other two days of the week that I'm in the office are more scheduled-up kind of days, right? But one of the insights for me was, and it was true to my experience, even if I have an eight-hour workday blocked out where I don't have any appointments, I can't do deep work for 8 hours. And he makes the point that probably, I can't remember if it's three to four hours, but three to four hours is about the most deep work you can do in a day, and you probably need to take a break in the middle. That was an *aha* for me in that I said, first of all, I don't have to block out a block to get deep work done, even on some of the days that are busier. If I can block out two hours that I'm going to focus on something, I can get a lot done in those two hours with that focus and then to think a little bit smaller in scope. My experience implementing this has been- it's amazing how much I can get done in a three-hour deep work block, taking a break in the middle. If I really will eliminate distractions during those three hours, not do anything else except perhaps take a break in the middle, it's actually amazing when I can get done. That leaves a lot of room for what he calls in this book "the shallows and serendipity." Shallows being things that don't take as much focus, and serendipity, meaning openness to whatever happens, right? The *aha* for me was, when we're talking about deep work here, we're probably talking about 10 to 15 hours of my work week. We're not talking about 25, 30, 40 hours a week of deep work. Now, there might be occasional weeks that demand a ton of work, but those are special weeks. A normal week, if I can get 15 hours of deep work done over the course of maybe four or five blocks that I blocked out, that is going to be amazing. And then it's going to actually allow me to be more present and to enjoy more all the other little things that I have to do and just the casual conversations that I get to have with folks throughout my work week.

**Autumn:** I think one final thought on this section, similarly to what I offered before about if your primary job is managing a household or raising children, I think for some of our friends who may listen, I think one of our friends, Grant, he's an electrician, his work days are largely scheduled for him. He shows up at a job site and does the work that he has to do and doesn't have much control over. He gets to decide what he needs to do, but he doesn't have control over where he's going that day. He's given an assignment or what building he's working on. He's given an assignment. So, if your job looks more like that, I do think there's still wisdom in this principle. In this way, going back to our friend Grant. If he, for instance, is thinking about his family and does want to think through some goals for his family or give some thought to a particular area of life, and if that sounds more like your reality day to day, I still think this idea of setting aside an hour of uninterrupted time when you set aside technology and focus just on those questions can be incredibly fruitful. Or similarly, if you're a mom raising young children and you find that some of those household management things like finding a preschool for your child or corresponding with someone answering your email, if that requires maybe an hour or hour and a half of uninterrupted time, then talk to your spouse about setting that aside. Agree to the time that you're given and then utilize that time to think about those things. It just maximizes your ability to contemplate these bigger ideas or goals in a way that interrupted time never allows.

**Hunter:** And one thing I really like that you're doing here is you're actually taking these principles and applying them more to what we might call office work or even outside-the-home work. And if you think about this bigger scope, a lot of what we do in life is work even if it's not work we're getting paid for or work we're doing outside the home. So, these

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principles apply to more than just your professional work or your office work or your outside-the-home work. Or, if you don't work outside the home, they can still apply to the work you do.

**Autumn:** Alright, so principle five, “accept your unipresence.” What is principle six?

**Hunter:** “Embrace productive rest.” I was a little annoyed that even rest had to be productive. I was like, okay, enough of the productivity, can't we just embrace rest? But he says embrace productive rest. What does he mean by that?

**Autumn:** I don't know, what does he mean by that?

**Hunter:** He means this actually: to be a present and productive human being, you actually have to rest. And rest isn't against productivity. It's not like you're either productive or you're resting. They're actually integrated. So, in that sense it could just be ‘embrace rest’ because rest is going to make you more present, and, when you are trying to get something done, it's going to make you more productive. For example, he goes all into the effect that sleep has on your productivity. Well, sleep is anything but productive. It's not doing something, but it is productive because it's helping you restore and replenish your capacity. So, embrace rest, that's the fifth principle.

**Autumn:** Embrace rest. He says going to bed earlier. I think that productive rest is also maybe applying some of that purpose or thought to the way that we spend our resting or down time, which actually is pretty obvious in one of his principles in this- practices, I'm sorry, not principle—the principle is embrace productive rest—one of the practices that he talks about is Sabbath, and I did want to take a slight detour here because this term, Hunter, in all my years, I've lived in grown up in church world, went to Bible college, have done some studying after that, worked in a church, and only in the last perhaps three years, maybe five years, but really in the last three years have I seen this idea of Sabbath popping up all over in all sorts of books, on podcasts. And so, to put it in really modern nomenclature, I think Sabbath is trending right now in the Christian world.

**Hunter:** Sabbath is like Hansel, it's so hot right now.

**Autumn:** Just pull up that Zoolander—just do yourself a favor, pull up that Zoolander clip.

**Hunter:** Just Google ‘Hansel, he's so hot right now,’ and enjoy that Zoolander clip. It really is hot right now. It really is trendy. I think it's probably trendy for a reason and that is that everyone is feeling pulled and stretched and stressed. And so, it's a principle of biblical wisdom that is attractive to those of us who are just living in the noisy modern world. I would first of all put Sabbath, for New Testament Christians, I would put it in the category of wisdom, not law. It is interesting that of all the moral law in the Old Testament, it gets repeated in some form by the New Testament authors or Jesus, except the principle of Sabbath. It doesn't anywhere get demanded. I think that's probably because of the cultural change that happens with the New Testament era, the Christian Sabbath moved to Sunday because of the resurrection. That was the day of resurrection. And yet, for everyone, Sunday was the day they had to work. So, you couldn't take off work to go to church. And so, it's probably true that the early churches gathered in the evenings, either early in the mornings or in the evenings on Sundays, like after work, to celebrate Sabbath and remember the resurrection of Jesus. And so, they couldn't just demand like, you got to take a day, a week off because the structure of society didn't necessarily allow for or permit that. But that's a digression. The point being we're now not commanded in the New Testament to take a Sabbath. The principle of Sabbath actually gets in some sense kind of spiritualized to the

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rest we have in Christ and the rest that is coming in the kingdom of God. All that said, I think there is a wisdom principle, wisdom being how do you navigate life skillfully, that's still there, and the fabric God wove in to the creation where He rested on the seventh day, and to the extent you have enough control over your schedule where you can take a full day a week to Sabbath, then I do think that's a healthy way to live. And it's true to the way God made us to flourish.

**Autumn:** Thanks. That is a really helpful way to think about it. It is this principle, the principle of Sabbath, is a wisdom principle woven into creation and something that we see God Himself and Jesus demonstrating. You mentioned too that there's this wisdom principle and there is a second principle contained in this idea of Sabbath in the New Testament, and that is the worship principle. Can you explain how that shapes our perspective as modern people on Sabbath?

**Hunter:** Sabbath for New Testament Christians became the day that we remember the death and the resurrection of Jesus. So, the focus for them was on Sunday, on the day He rose, we gather with the people of God and we hear His Word, we share what He's doing in our lives and we celebrate the Lord's Supper. And so, we remember weekly the death and resurrection of Jesus. I actually think that part is more clear in the New Testament than, be sure to take a day, a week off of work. Again, because a lot of the first century Christians probably worked on Sunday, Sunday just being a normal day of the week, first day of the week for them. A lot of them probably worked on Sunday, and yet they still made space in a workday to gather with the church and to worship and to remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. So, I think that's a really important principle to add to Sabbath. It's not just about taking the day off, but it's also about being with God's people and hearing God's Word and remembering what He's done for us.

**Autumn:** So, in the aspect of this is the wisdom principle, we can see these patterns in creation and know that this pattern of rest is restorative. As you mentioned before in the worship principle as it relates to Sabbath and the practices in the New Testament, this part of it is described in a way that we should follow gathering together with believers regularly to worship Jesus and hear His Word.

**Hunter:** That's right. I found particularly inspiring Jordan Raynor, our author, describing how he structures Sundays with his family really starting Saturday night. And he's not a pastor; so, he's like a normal Christian. And how he leads his family in Sabbath, which includes going to church but is bigger than going to church, and I just found it inspiring. He has a big emphasis on having fun and together as a family and worshipping God together, feasting together as a family, and celebrating what God's done. So, I found that part particularly good. This section focuses on three rhythms of rest. One is hourly rhythm, one is a daily rhythm, and one is this weekly rhythm of Sabbath. So, the daily rhythm he's suggesting is getting enough sleep. He calls it creating a sleep opportunity. You need enough window of time that you're committed to trying to sleep, that your life has got to get some sleep in there. But the one that I took away is really helpful was the one he called, "break well every other hour." And this was particularly helpful in my deep work sessions of saying if I've got say, a four-hour deep work block or a three-hour deep work block, in the middle of that, I'm going to stop and just take a little 15 to 20 minute break. He mentioned that if you work with your hands, you should probably break by doing something with your mind. And if you work with your mind, you should probably break by doing something physical or with your hands. And that's been really good for me. This is where I go for a quick walk, or if I'm working from home, I will go put clothes in the laundry or fold the clothes that have come out of the laundry, or clean up the kitchen, or run the dishwasher, or just something little, house chores, that I can literally do in 15 minutes and then go back to work. And I found that to be really helpful.



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**Autumn:** I do appreciate the reminder here in this trending idea of Sabbath and also in this chapter about the purpose, he says productive rest; I do think rest is purposeful in many ways. It obviously has really practical- our bodies have a practical need for rest. But the ceasing from work throughout the Bible is presented as an opportunity to trust. We rest from our labor because we trust God in all things that when we are not working and not productive, He always, in our rest and in our productivity, is ultimately the One who orders our lives and brings about any fruit from our labor. And so, our rest is a statement of trust in His continual work in the world today, tomorrow, and always. So, I love that reminder. That is always a good and needed reminder for me.

**Hunter:** Autumn is typically skeptical of anything that is so hot right now in Christian subculture-

**Autumn:** That's so true. There's maybe nothing truer about me.

**Hunter:** -and she's really just talked herself into—and thank you guys who are listening for just creating a space where I could kind of counsel herself into—receiving the wisdom of Sabbath, even though it's also other Christians have also vastly seen the wisdom of Sabbath right now. Glad to see you've arrived at this place.

**Autumn:** Thanks, Hunter. Thank you. I'm okay with the biblical wisdom of it. If it seems to be trending, though, I will for sure have a high level of skepticism about it.

**Hunter:** You and I actually share that characteristic, and it probably bleeds it to our podcast conversation.

**Autumn:** Probably. Alright, principle five, accept your unipresence; principle six, embrace productive rest. What is principle seven?

**Hunter:** “Eliminate all hurry.” And he is integrating the thoughts of author John Mark Comer, who says ruthlessly eliminate hurry. So, he's not so ruthless about it. He just says eliminate all hurry.

**Autumn:** Even though John Mark Comer also attributes this to being an original Dallas Willard quote.

**Hunter:** Okay, there you go.

**Autumn:** I think Jordan Raynor mentions that too. When I hear this just at surface value, eliminate all hurry, I want to reject it at face value simply because the demands that life places on us—require us—to, at times, respond with urgency. So, for instance, even if I work very hard to make our school mornings—I have three children—make our school mornings timed so that they're not overly stressful, there are still days when things don't go to plan or when my kids unsurprisingly don't follow my idea of how the morning should go, and then we have to get out the door quickly in order to get to school. So, what has been helpful for me is to differentiate between the idea of busyness, which is something we all experience, and hurry, which is sort of an internal anxious state.

**Hunter:** He does a good job here of saying, hey, you're going to be busy, and busyness can actually be productive. Hurry is something different than being busy. I like that. That's a little counterintuitive. We often hear people railing against busyness, busyness, busyness, busyness. And my pushback on that is most of the people who I hear railing on busyness, I don't think are all that productive. If you're committed to being productive, there's a level of just kind of moving from one thing to the next, filling your minutes, filling your days, that just happens as a result of being productive and having

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goals and things you want to accomplish. Hurry, though, is, I think, a better way to describe maybe what the people who are concerned about busyness are actually concerned about. Which is that we're so angry that we don't have time to focus on what's right in front of us, focus on the people that are right in front of us. And we end up making hasty or poor decisions or hasty or poor responses because we just want to get that past us. And then it ends up just creating more problems.

**Autumn:** And the big idea in John Mark Comer's book that Jordan Raynor replicates a little bit here in this section is that hurry, that sort of angry presence, moving from one thing to the next, invites a sort of distractedness that doesn't allow us to be present with the people in the places that we want to prioritize and doesn't allow us to grow a relationship with God. That, as we've said, is the basis for our ability to do any of these other things and to be present at all. So, that is the big idea in Comer's work that Jordan Raynor talks about a little bit in this section as well. And that is a helpful understanding for me. I do want to be, when I'm with my kids, I do want to be present with them. When I'm at work with my coworkers, meeting with someone, I do want to be present and not distracted. And so, the elimination of hurry is the attempt to eliminate an angry presence and those sorts of continual distractions that pull us away from the people and places that are important. Is there anything in this section, Hunter, as far as the practices that Jordan Raynor suggests that were helpful for you?

**Hunter:** Well, he talks a lot about time budgeting, and we won't get into all the details of that. It's a really interesting approach to looking at your days, but the last principle or the last practice is to protect your time with a unique approach to say no. And I thought it was really helpful to me in learning how to just say no in a way that is helpful to other people but also gracious and honors your own priorities. I've got several things in my inbox right now that I need to decline to do because they're just kind of peripheral. They wouldn't be anything central to my calling as a pastor or to my friendships. They're just kind of peripheral, and so I need to say no to them, but I can say no in a way that still maybe offers a response of help in one particular focus way that I might be able to help them or where it directs them to other places that could be helpful.

**Autumn:** One thing in that section that was good for me to think about was giving some thought to saying yes or no in a way that actually examines your purpose and motivation in it. Sometimes it's easy to say no to something if you're already over-committed or feeling stressed in that moment. If in that moment you feel overwhelmed and you receive a request, it's easy to say no in a way that is simply self-protective. That's not necessarily a good way to say no in that moment in a hasty manner. It's similarly not good to say yes to certain things when you just sort of feel like, yes, I couldn't take that on or agree to that commitment or show up at that party without an actual assessment of your time and your motivation in it. And so, some of the examples he gives and the steps to take to think through it were a good reminder for me in that section. In our current therapeutic climate, with a lot of talk of boundaries, sometimes it's easy to say no and believe that you're simply being boundaried when in reality you're being selfish with your time. But you can also say yes to things for a self-serving reason. And so that was the part of it that was a good examination, good reminder for me to examine motives in those yeses and nos.

Okay, this brings us through principles five, six and seven. Accept your unipresence, embrace productive rest, eliminate all hurry. I did want to extend, Hunter, a couple of cautions to our listeners in this. You and I both like to be productive, and you said that, just a moment ago, you mentioned that there are many people who simply rail on busyness, and there's some wisdom to not simply filling our time for the sake of filling our time. And so, in these discussions now we've

## THE VISION FOR LIFE PODCAST

Episode 98 | VFL Reads: Redeeming Your Time, Part 2

Featuring: Autumn Gardner and Hunter Beaumont



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had last weekend, this week, and we're talking about a book about being, what's the subtitle?—seven biblical principles for being purposeful present and *wildly* productive—which alludes to being very productive. So, I want to caution our listeners to not confuse productivity with their worth as a person, or to calculate their worth or anyone else's via how productive they or that person may be. That's not our intent in this conversation. Our time, our energy, and our resources are given to us by God to participate with Him in kingdom work, and they're fueled by his presence and his purpose. And our worth is always derived from our being created in His image and being granted this gift of life. It isn't tied to our productivity, but it is tied to our status as people and as God's children.

**Hunter:** That's really well said, and that's coming to you from someone who is wildly productive, and yet I think you do a great job of not finding your identity in that. And my heart in sharing this book with our listeners was Jesus's words to seek first the kingdom and His righteousness and all these other things will be added to you. That has been a verse that has just stuck with me over the years, and I just keep coming back to it. It's such a captivating vision for life for me, and I need to think about how I do that. And it's not like, oh, I've figured it out, I'm just going to go do it for the rest of my life. I need to constantly update that. And some seasons I need to take a fresh look at how I'm doing that. And so, this book came to me at a season when I was doing that and thought, this is really practical in helping me and hopefully helping our listeners think about that. So, that's the reason we want to recommend it. Jordan Raynor—the book is called *Redeeming Your Time: 7 Biblical Principles for Being Purposeful, Present & Wildly Productive*, by Jordan Raynor. Pick it up and let us know what you learn from it.

**Autumn:** If you have questions or comments, suggestions for what you'd like to hear us discuss on the podcast in the future, you can send all of that anytime to [podcast@fellowshipdenver.org](mailto:podcast@fellowshipdenver.org). Thanks for joining us on the Vision for Life podcast. Special thanks to Adam Anglin for our theme, to Jesse Cowan, our producer, and to Judd Connell, who provides transcription for these episodes.