

GROUP. LIFE.
Clocks, Calendars, and Commitments
Psalm 90:10, 12
Mark 1:16-21

I have been watching the news about N. Korea with sadness and disgust. Don't you HATE DICTATORS? I mean, I am so glad that we live in AMERICA, where we do not TOLERATE BULLIES that try to push their will and agendas on the little people around them! Well, there are actually two RUTHLESS DICTATORS that may be living in your home. These brazen rascals are constantly telling you what to do and when to do it! They do not care about the things that you really WANT to do, or even about the things that you NEED to do. They just want you to do what THEY have determined that you should do. ENOUGH! It is time to put them in their place and let them know that they will not run your life anymore. **Do you know who these dual dictators are?** No, they are NOT your PARENTS (or your SPOUSE and your BOSS)! Instead, they are these two harmless looking objects. [Hold up a CLOCK and a CALENDAR]

This is SILLY, right? These little things are not really MAKING you do anything. They have no will and no power. They just lie quietly on our counter or sit on the wall and TICK. Yet, the truth is that our clocks and calendars are CONSUMING our lives as they are driven by the NEEDS, DESIRES, EXPECTATIONS and DEMANDS of . . . **SOMEONE!** So, **WHO is telling YOUR clocks and calendars what to pressure you to do?** Well ultimately, **YOU ARE!** **Do you realize that either intentionally or by default YOU are DECIDING what needs, desires, expectations, and demands that you will submit to in your life!** HOW you SPEND your TIME is really up to you! In light of this, the BOTTOM LINE of this entire message is based upon a truth that each of us must wrestle with in our individual lives:

What you build your SCHEDULE around is what you are building your LIFE upon.

Has that thought ever occurred to you? It should. **If you look at your schedule you will CLEARLY SEE what your life is all about!** Your TIME IS YOUR LIFE! You may want to argue with me and say that your CURRENT schedule is just an ANOMOLY; that it will change in a little while after you get that promotion or finish that project. You truly have every INTENTION of spending more time with your spouse or with your kids or in that ministry that needs you so badly. Yep. Your schedule says a LOT about YOU. **Some of you may FEEL that your schedule RULES YOU, but I would say that YOUR SCHEDULE actually REVEALS YOU. It reveals your FEARS and your HOPES and your TRUE PRIORITIES.** If I was able to look at the way you spent your time every day in 2017, I could pretty much figure out what is MOST IMPORTANT to you!

AREAS OF LIFE THAT CONSUME OUR TIME:

*Work/School [Career prep or occupation preoccupation!]

*Travel Time [A mobile society spends a lot of time in cars, trains, and planes!]

*Hobbies

*Entertainment

***Family Time**

Your schedule tells me a lot about your FAMILY LIFE. **I wonder what it SCREAMS to your family?**

-How much time are you spending WITH your spouse?

-How much time are you spending WITH your children?

***Spiritual Life**

Your schedule also says way more about your SPIRITUAL LIFE than you probably want to admit. Does God even REGISTER on your ROUTINES?

-How much time do you spend WITH God? [Prayer, Reading Scripture, etc.]

-How much time do you spend SERVING God? [Ministry, Sharing]

-How much time are you spending with God's people? [Small Group, Church]

If your clocks and calendars are not LEADING you to CHRIST, to your FAMILY, and to God's family, then you probably need to RETOOL those decorative dictators. But don't despair! Your calendar does not have to be your ENEMY! **You see, our schedules not only REVEAL our PRIORITIES, they can also help to CREATE our PRIORITIES!** Moses, one of God's greatest chosen leaders, had some very wise things to say about our schedules. He knew the VALUE and the BREVITY of time. This is why he penned these words in the only Psalm that he ever wrote:

Psalm 90:10, 12 NIV

10 Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away. ... 12 Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.

Who knows how many years any one of us will get in our lifetime? Only God. But we get to decide how those years will be spent. This is why Moses asked God to teach him how to NUMBER his days. **The word "number" means to COUNT our days. That is, to REALIZE that we have a LIMITED NUMBER of days on this earth! This makes time PRECIOUS. Number also means that we need to ACCOUNT FOR our days. That is, we need to ASSIGN them a purpose.** This literally means that we need to SCHEDULE them around the things that we MOST want to BE and DO in life.

This should be an encouragement to you today. **WHAT NEEDS TO BE CREATED IN YOUR LIFE?** [Family, Spiritual life, health, Work, etc.] You can actually SCHEDULE time for that! Of course, this will REQUIRE that you BUY NEW CLOCKS and CALENDARS for your home (figuratively speaking!). This is COSTLY. You see, our ROUTINES have been developed (on purpose or by default!), and they are not easy to CHANGE. Again, we have BULLIES around us that want to DICTATE just how we should spend our time. You will have to STAND UP to them if you want to change. You will have to be very INTENTIONAL about it if you want to build some new routines, and you will have to make the hard decision to get RID of some routines that, quite frankly, you are very COMFORTABLE with right now. How much do you want to create something NEW in your life? You must remember that your TIME

actually IS your LIFE! Here is how you can make the most of it by applying the counsel of Moses. It is time to NUMBER your days.

QUESTIONS TO IMPROVE YOUR USE OF TIME:

***What relationships of mine NEED to become HEALTHIER right now . . . and what TIME CHANGE do I need to make in order to help make them so?**

- Could you REDUCE the time you give to some things for the sake of other needs?
- Are you “hanging out with the boys” to the detriment of your marriage/family?

***What do I NEED to get BETTER at right now . . .? [Exercise, eating, work skills?]**

- What areas of knowledge do I need to focus on right now?

***What ASSUMPTIONS about my schedule do I need to REVISIT?**

SEASONS of life change and we need to learn to BALANCE new realities with new actions!

- Do you really HAVE to work overtime every week? Why? [[Choosing to Cheat](#)]
- Do your kids really HAVE to be on every sports team? Why?

***What INTERNAL PERSPECTIVES are ROBBING me of the moments that I have?**

Our use of time is tied to an INTERNAL COMPONENT of HEALTH that we must not ignore. Two weeks ago I preached on Soul Stillness in Hernando, and I talked about a POWERFUL STATEMENT that Dallas Willard said to John Ortberg when John had asked him about how he could be truly productive when he had so many things to do in ministry. Dallas’s statement was disturbing, confusing, and convicting: **“You must ruthlessly eliminate hurry from your life.”**

*So, how can we eliminate hurry if we have SO MUCH to do? [[Busy Vs. Hurry](#)]

[[Read – P. 134, Soul Keeping by John Ortberg](#)]

[My prayer for my friend in ministry during his hectic week: Be present!]

***What kind of ALIGNMENT could I bring to my various activities?**

- How Lisa changed my HUNTING LIFE . . . for the BETTER! [[Bringing kids](#)]

All of this is GOOD STUFF, and it will help you to some degree. But something is missing from this list of questions that I have left out ON PURPOSE. The most IMPORTANT QUESTION that I could EVER ask you about your schedule is this:

***What does JESUS have to say about your use of time?**

JESUS is the MASTER at helping us to make the MOST of our use of time because he is God, and because he was the Master at DEMONSTRATING DIVINE WISDOM in his life and ministry! The truth is that we DO NOT REALLY KNOW BEST how to use our time. Our perspectives are so limited, and our awareness of what is really going on around us is so skimpy that we HAVE to get some OUTSIDE HELP!

There were some men in Jesus’s day who were in a settled routine. They did the same things every day. They were fishermen. I know what fishermen do: they

spend thousands of dollars on fishing rods and lures and boats and . . . Just kidding (kind of!). They fish . . . and they fish, and then they CLEAN fish, and then they WEAVE NETS, and then they MEND NETS, and then they CLEAN BOATS, and then they FISH. And they were GREAT at fishing! (Although on two separate occasions they fished all night without catching anything only to have Jesus give them some simple instructions and they caught a boatload!!) Do you get the picture? Jesus came along and messed with their routines! He does the same thing to us. This is due to something that I have seen CONSISTENTLY in scripture. I want us to read **Mark 1:16-21 NLT**

16 One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew throwing a net into the water, for they fished for a living. 17 Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me, and I will show you how to fish for people!" 18 And they left their nets at once and followed him. 19 A little farther up the shore Jesus saw Zebedee's sons, James and John, in a boat repairing their nets. 20 He called them at once, and they also followed him, leaving their father, Zebedee, in the boat with the hired men. 21 Jesus and his companions went to the town of Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue and began to teach.

I don't know if you saw this or not in these verses, but it is very clear to me.

The commitment to follow Jesus always leads to a RADICAL CHANGE in the way that we use our TIME.

Jesus gave them one simple command: FOLLOW ME! This was the call to accept him as the LORD of their entire LIFE. This encompassed every part of their life: their money, their friendships, their hobbies; in short - their TIME. Now, he did not demand that they accept the call, but once they did, the command was firm!

*As the Sovereign Lord, He CHOOSES US and then SHOWS US what Lordship is!

*He immediately begins to exercise Lordship over key areas of our lives!

Before I met Christ, my time was MY OWN. I did what I wanted whenever I wanted to do it and for however long I wanted to do it. When Jesus came into my life, HE STOLE MY WATCH! (kind of!) What I mean is, when I accepted Christ as my Lord, he changed my priorities and my focus and the way I spent my time began to change. RADICALLY! This was no accident. I know for a fact that he did this on purpose, and HE DID NOT ASK FOR MY PERMISSION! We can clearly see this in the way that he led the disciples once he called them to himself. I think it is so beautiful how he pulled them right into his own AGENDA and PURPOSE for their lives from the first moment that he met them. They were SWEPT into a completely new world and a NEW WAY of SPENDING their time. **I wonder, is Jesus LORD OF YOUR SCHEDULE?** How much does he influence the way that you spend your time right now? If it is true that what you build your schedule around is what you are building your life upon, then CHRIST must become the CENTERPIECE of your CALENDAR and your CLOCK!

You see, the disciples allowed Jesus to **RADICALLY RESTRUCTURE** their use of time. They were accustomed to spending most of their hours on a boat doing things that came naturally to them at that time. Jesus brought them into a new way of spending their days that often left them **ASTONISHED** or **BEWILDERED**! I have often felt the same way. But I want to know and experience **GOD'S BEST** for my life and time. I want to know and obey **HIS WILL** in my schedule so that I can build my life upon what matters **MOST**!

Now, I realize that the very title of this **SERIES** is **GROUP LIFE**. Some of you may be wondering why I have titled this series this way since I have not addressed any specific aspect of what that means. I know. I did this because I believe that we needed first to understand the main principles that I focused on today in order to truly understand **WHY** Jesus changes our schedules in the way that he does. Know this: What he does will **ALWAYS RESULT** in things that will **DO US GOOD** and that will **BRING HIM GLORY**. He is faithful. Moses knew this as well!

Psalm 90:14-17 NLT

14 Satisfy us each morning with your unfailing love, so we may sing for joy to the end of our lives. 15 Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery! Replace the evil years with good. 16 Let us, your servants, see you work again; let our children see your glory. 17 And may the Lord our God show us his approval and make our efforts successful. Yes, make our efforts successful!

Let's pray.