

# LEARN TO PRIORITIZE YOUR TIME

There is one entity that all have in common and it doesn't matter if you are an executive of a large corporation, own a business, work in a factory or if you are a full-time homemaker or a student. This commonality doesn't matter if you are young or old or somewhere in between. It doesn't depend on your social status or lack of it. It is the same for all of us. That entity is time. The only difference is what we do with it.

In the book, "The Frog In The Kettle", George Barna states, "During the 90's, in spite of our enjoyment of and the desire for possessions and wealth, we will come to believe that **success** is not about acquisition. It is about control. With our schedules increasingly hectic; the economy moving ahead at unforeseen ways, at breakneck speed; relationships coming and going; and with technology altering how we experience reality, life will seem out of control. Thus the person who can put the pieces together in such a way as to make sense out of this fast-paced, non-conventional way of life will be seen as successful."

Barna also says, "While money will continue to play a major role in our decisions and actions, by the year 2000 A.D. we will have shifted to using time as our dominant indicator of value." We have all heard the

phrase "time is money", but as we approach the year 2000, money will be used to guard the precious commodity of time. Thus, the person who can make the best use of these 168 hours per week or manage the 10,080 minutes you are given each week, will be the one who will be viewed as being successful.

What a balancing act we are trying to pull off! Between finding time to do all that our job requires, we need to find time for ourself, our spouse, family, friends and our church. On top of that, attend the kids ball games and school functions. Then, if there isn't enough money we can "moonlight" to get a little extra cash. Life is definitely becoming more and more complicated.

You know what it is like trying to administrate all areas of your life. Just look at all the challenges and frustrations you have had to manage this week. All of those people, projects, phone calls, pressures, and problems have taken your time, not to mention what carried over from last week and what you will face next week.

That is why learning to prioritize our time is so very vital in the 90's. Between our professional life and our personal life, how can we find the time to meet all the challenges and the demands?

Learning to prioritize your time is like learning how to handle your money. It seems like we all spend our money on things which are important to us. I believe that we do the same with the time that we have been given. You will spend your time on the things that you deem important.

When it comes to setting up a way of handling and spending our money, we have two different types of expenses. One is what I will call, **fixed** and the other is **discretionary** expenses.

In your personal budget, the fixed expenses are the expenditures which really do not change from month to month. Examples would be a mortgage or rental payment; utilities; car payment; etc. Some of these may fluctuate but they are expenses that you will have every month. These things take up a majority of your personal budget.

The money that is left over after the fixed expenses, we spend on groceries, clothes, entertainment, hobbies, etc. How you spend that discretionary money is, more than likely, based upon the need. For instance, I have a choice of what to do with the money that is left after my fixed expenses. I can buy necessity items or I can purchase something that I want but don't necessarily need. That choice is mine.

It is the same with time. You have some fixed and discretionary time. How you spend your discretionary time depends on how you manage those remaining hours of your day or week. That choice is up to you.

## URGENT

*The urgent things are those things that you don't have time to do but you seem to make time to get them done.*

## IMPORTANT

*The important things are those things that you need to do but never have time to do them.*

List some things that would be  
URGENT.

List some things that would be  
IMPORTANT.

Take a few minutes to work through the Management Profile. Think about all the people you have seen, the projects you have worked on, phone calls you have made, problems you have handled and pressures you have faced in the last week.

MANAGEMENT PROFILE		
Area	Professional	Personal
People		
Projects		
Phone Calls		
Problems		
Pressures		
What observations can you make from this?		

## LIST THE 10 AREAS OF YOUR LIFE MOST IMPORTANT TO YOU.

AREA	How much time per week do you spend in this area?	How much time per week should I spend in this area?

### *Exercise*

For two days this coming week, log how you spend your time in half hour increments. I would suggest that you log your time on Tuesday and Wednesday. The next page is divided into two 24 hour days with half hour increments starting at 6:00 a.m. This exercise will let you see how well you managed your time for 48 hours out of 168 hours of the week.

# TIME LOG

Time	Day One	Day Two
6:00 am		
6:30 am		
7:00 am		
7:30 am		
8:00 am		
8:30 am		
9:00 am		
9:30 am		
10:00 am		
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5:00 am		
5:30 am		

When it comes to money, there are people that are very gifted in being able to manage it. When it comes to time, there are also people that are gifted in being able to use it.

**We all must learn to manage both our money and our time.**

God has created everyone of us uniquely different. To some He has given five talents, to others two and then to others just one. I am confident that whatever talents and abilities God has given to you, it is enough to complete the job that he has for you to do. The important thing to remember when it comes to the Kingdom is that God is far more interested in us **being** than in us **doing**. Many times people get so involved in doing Christian things that they forget what being a Christian really is.

The entire purpose of this chapter is to make you think about where you spend your time. Is it on the important or the urgent things? God just wants us to learn to manage our time so that we have time to be with Him. You see, with the busy schedules that we all keep, if we don't schedule God in our day we will schedule God right out of our day.

*How much time did you give God this last week?*

*Where did God fit in the balancing of projects, phone calls, people, problems and pressures of your week?*

Monday	_____	Thursday	_____	Saturday	_____
Tuesday	_____	Friday	_____	Sunday	_____
Wednesday	_____				

***Did you know that God misses His time with you?***

*God, I'm just too busy for you today.*

*There are just so many things that have gotten in my way. You know that I really want to be with you, but there is only so much a person can do. But tomorrow I will spend time with you...I'm just too busy today!*

If you don't schedule God into your week, I am willing to bet you that you will have a difficult time finding time for God. You may be able to mark off Sunday morning to be in church and possibly even Sunday evening, but what about the rest of the week? You know God really misses you when you don't show up to spend time with Him.

*When is the best time for you to spend with God?*

Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday  
Sunday

This next week, schedule a time that you will spend with Him everyday. Make it just as important as any business appointment that you may have during your day. **Don't miss it!**

The story is told of John Wesley. He had been invited to have dinner with the Queen of England. That night they feasted on the finest of foods. They had a beautiful dinner.

After dining they had a time of conversation, but very early in the evening John Wesley told the queen that he would have to go because he had an early morning appointment. That appointment he had was with his Heavenly Father.

**When is your time with your Heavenly Father?**



# LEARN TO HAVE A DAILY QUIET TIME

When you first come to know Jesus Christ you are instructed that you should read your Bible, pray, go to church, fellowship with other believers and tell others about what Jesus has done in your life. That is where you begin your Christian life.

Whether you have just recently trusted Christ or you have been a Christian for many years, it is important that you do these things. How have you done? Have you learned to have a daily quality time with God?

**Where are you at this moment on your spiritual journey?**

**At the starting point?**

Just getting started in developing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

***Been on the journey for a long time?***

You have been through some of the rough and the smooth parts of the journey. You have been on the mountain top and you also know what it is like to be in the valley.

***Toward the end of the journey?***

It doesn't matter how old you are or how long you have been on a spiritual journey, you still need to continue to grow in your relationship with Jesus Christ.

Jesus addresses the church in Ephesus, He says in Revelation 2:4-5,

"Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first."

In this chapter we are going back to basics in our relationship with Jesus Christ.

Over the years I have learned the importance of the fundamentals. In whatever you are learning or possibly even learning all over again, you must understand the basic fundamental skills. It doesn't matter if you are learning how to ski, how to hit a golf ball, how to operate a computer, how to work with a craft, or how to have a daily time with God. The elementary things are so very vitally important. If you want to really excel, you must first learn the basics.

In Matthew chapters 5-7, Jesus preaches a message called "The Sermon On The Mount." In this sermon, Jesus addresses many issues that affect our daily lives. These three chapters are full of the basic teachings of the Master.

He begins with what is called the Beatitudes. In Matthew 5:1, Jesus says,

*"Humble men are very fortunate! For the Kingdom of Heaven is given to them. Those who mourn are fortunate! For they shall be comforted. The meek and the lowly are fortunate! For the whole world belongs to them. Happy are those who long to be just and good, for they shall be completely satisfied."*

Jesus goes on to talk about the attitudes like kindness and mercy, peace and faithfulness and purity of heart.

At the conclusion of this challenging sermon, Jesus uses an illustration about a wise man and a foolish man. The difference is the way that these two men constructed their house.

**Matthew 7:24** says,

*"Therefore everyone who hears these words and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."*

In **verse 26** of the same chapter it says,

*"But everyone that hears the words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man that built his house on the sand."*

For when the rain came, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house. One had a great crash and the other one stood firm, not a bit bothered by the weather.

*In your own words, What was the difference in the way that each constructed their house?*

Foolish Man

Wise Man

The message that Jesus was trying to get across was the importance of the foundation. One was built on sand and the other on the rock. Jesus ends His sermon by telling the people that it is important to make sure you have a solid foundation to build on.

*What foundation have you been building on?*

*(circle one)*

**SAND**

**ROCK**

If you are going to have a spiritual foundation that you can build your life on, the first thing you will need to establish in your life is a daily time with God. Whether you have or have not learned to spend time with God, is not the question. If you are ever going to grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ you will need to learn to spend time with Him. That is how you can build a spiritual house that is built on the solid Rock, Christ Jesus.

### DUTY OR DESIRE

For many, when they come to know Jesus Christ, they immediately are thrown a set of new rules and regulations. They quickly learn **what is** and **what is not** acceptable in a Christian life. It seems to me that people seem to help us learn the don'ts much quicker than taking the time to teach us the do's.

What happens, if we are not careful, is that what we experienced becomes a religion instead of a personal relationship. Let me explain. Religion, (all the do's and don'ts,) brings bondage to your life. But a personal relationship, sets us free to learn to love and develop a relationship with Jesus Christ. That relationship will bring freedom and not bondage.

**John 8:31**

**"You shall know the truth and the truth will set you free."**

We can see that as we grow in the truth and the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that we experience freedom from a life of religiosity. God is interested in you getting to know Him. As you then fall in love with Him more each day, you will not want to do the things that are not pleasing to Him. Through your obedience to Him you will do those things that please your Heavenly Father.

There are many people who have attended church. They have learned all the rules, but feel like they just have not grown in their relationship with God. As I have talked with people, I find that many sense in their lives very little spiritual progress. They are on the milk when they should be on the meat. They should be grown-ups spiritually, but they are still just babes in Christ.

### Wedding Day

For several months we had been planning for this very special day in our lives. It was a beautiful day! I remember it like it was yesterday. It was May 14th, 1977. It was our wedding day.

That Saturday night as I stood at the altar, way in the back of this beautifully decorated church, I caught just a glimpse of my bride-to-be. She was absolutely beautiful and I knew that soon she would be my wife.

I watched with great anticipation as all of the bridesmaids slowly came down the aisle to meet the groomsmen. Then it was time for Rachel's little three year old brother Joey to escort Nikki, the little flower girl. They were truly a couple of cute kids, but what I was waiting so patiently for, was my bride to make her walk down the aisle.

As the organist began to play the wedding march, everyone stood as Rachel began her walk. I watched every step as she slowly made her way down the aisle. Her face was beaming and so was mine. **You could see we were in love.**

When she finally got to the altar, I leaned over to her and whispered, **"You're beautiful!"** Then I took the microphone and sang, "It Seems I've Always Loved You." What a day! At that moment I thought I could never love Rachel more.

We have now been married over fifteen years and I love her more today than I did on our wedding day. Our love has grown through the valleys and the mountain top experiences. We have faced many trials and challenges in our life in these years of marriage. The road hasn't always been smooth, but together we have made it through.

If there is one thing that we have learned, it is that there needs to be growth in a relationship. If you asked me about my marriage relationship and I told you that it has not changed very much since we got married, then what would you think of my relationship with my wife?

**To change means to grow and to grow means to change.** In our relationship, many things are different, but every change that has occurred has brought much growth to our lives and relationship with each other.

Whether it was a move from Colorado to Texas or an addition of two wonderful children, Marissa and Derek to our household, all of these changes have brought challenges and rewards in our relationship. So, as we have grown in our relationship with each other we have found that life doesn't remain the same. If a person is going to grow there will be changes.

*What changes have you seen in your life?*

In your relationship with God you also need to see changes. For as you see those changes, it shows you that you are growing in your most important relationship.

There are certain things that you need to do to see growth in your relationship with God. It is natural at times to feel as though your time with God is just a duty, but as you continue to spend time in God's presence you will have a desire for God. The important thing is that you are doing those things in your life that will cultivate growth in your relationship with God.

### DECISION

If you are going to see growth in your life, it will take a conscious decision on your part. That decision may come in the time of feast or famine. Sometimes that decision will be made when you are in shallow waters and sometimes in the deep waters of your life. It may even come in those times of frustration, desperation, helplessness or hopelessness. The important thing is that you make that decision.

Growing up as a teenager, we sang a chorus that goes like this,

*"I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back. No turning back."*

know Jesus better.

One morning, in February of 1991, a group of men were sitting around a table at a restaurant in Minneapolis, MN. That particular morning many different topics had been discussed.

After being at the restaurant for about half an hour the conversation changed when one of the men made this statement, *"I want to be a man of God."*

For years he had been a Christian, but he realized that there was more. You see, that kind of statement comes after you make a **heart** decision, not just a **head** decision. A heart decision is a commitment of counting the cost and paying the price, no matter what it takes.

Years ago, in the back of my Bible, I wrote this quote...

*"There is the agony of choice before  
the promise of change."*

Larry Lea

Before you are ever going to see growth in your life, you will have to make a premeditated decision to change. That is not always easy. There is agony in that kind of decision, but when you make it, then there is the possibility of change.

Last year my wife and I had talked about joining a health club. For a long period of time we had done just that...talk. We both were concerned about keeping physically fit, but it wasn't until we made the decision that we could honestly envision being in physical shape.



You see, making the decision to join a health club isn't what will cause the change in your physical body. Nothing will happen until you make a decision to change.

Before you will ever see progress in your spiritual life, you will need to make a decision and act on that decision. There are a lot of people who have a desire to grow, but they never make a real decision to grow, followed by action.

### DISCIPLINE

**I Timothy 4:7-8 says,**

*"...Train yourself to be godly. For physical training has some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come."*

Training and discipline are two words that mean work. Nothing just happens. If you have the desire and then make a decision, you are going to see something happen. The only way that it will happen is if you then discipline yourself.

*Who's responsible for your spiritual growth?*

It was a very hot summer day in Kansas City. My brother-in-law, Jeff, had just been notified that his name had been drawn to participate in a field goal kicking contest at Arrowhead Stadium that night.

Our plans had been to go and play golf, but that afternoon we went out in the August heat to kick field goals. My Dad, Jeff, and I got out the football and went to spend the afternoon at Lee's Summit

him sprinting down the track. He looked like he was running the 100 meters in a track meet. He would just fly down the track and then turn and walk back. I watched in amazement as this athlete repeated this time after time.

It was hot! The sweat from our brows streamed down our faces. I told Jeff and my Dad, "This guy is getting in shape for something." He was going through a grueling workout.

Shortly after I had first noticed this athlete, I was chasing a ball that my brother-in-law had kicked when this athlete ran by me. I got his attention and asked him if he was training for something. He told me his name was Kevin Ross and said that played for the Kansas City Chiefs. In the course of our conversation he told me that he was a holdout and he was in contract negotiations and had not yet signed a new contract.

A few minutes later, Dad went over to talk to Kevin. Dad told him that he was a minister and that he had been taught him a lesson that afternoon. As he watched as Kevin train, God spoke to him about discipline. Dad told him, "What we do in private will be seen in public." Dad explained, "You see, being a minister, the result of my private time of prayer and preparation will be seen in the pulpit on Sunday. People may never see what you are doing, but the result of what you are doing will be seen in Sunday's game."

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*What you do in private will be  
seen in public!*

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If you are going to really be a man or woman of God it will take discipline. It is your responsibility to grow in your relationship with God. Train yourself to be godly. Learn to discipline your desire for God.

**Philippians 3:10** says,

*"I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in his death."*

**Apostle Paul said,**

**I want to know Christ!**

**Now ask yourself...**

**Do I really want to  
know Christ?**

If you are really going to get to know Christ it will take the discipline of being in His presence daily. Learning to communicate with Him as a friend daily is the key to getting to know Christ. You need your time with Him so that you can get to know Him. Paul wanted to know Christ in a way that it changed him. **You...learn to know Christ and let him change you.**

## DISCIPLINE

The delight is the result of having a desire and making a conscious decision to do something about the desire. Then, as you discipline yourself, you can experience the delight of knowing Jesus Christ in a personal way.

True delight is daily experiencing God's presence as you live out each day. The Psalmist said it this way,

*"In your presence is fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures evermore."*

**John 10:10** says,

*"...I have come that you might have life and have it more abundantly."*

To live a full and abundant life means living daily in His presence. In learning to spend time with Jesus, you will learn what it is to experience His awesome presence throughout your day.

**Do you want to really experience  
God's presence in your life?**

It starts with a relationship with Jesus Christ. It may begin from either a sense of duty or a sincere desire for more of God. You then make a conscious decision to do something to bring about a change in your life. Then, it will take discipline from you, to see the delight of experiencing God's presence in you. Put all of these together and the result will be a growing and dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

What will bring the delight of God's  
presence in your life?

Let me suggest a growing relationship with Jesus Christ.  
That only comes as you learn to have a daily quality quiet  
time. I don't offer a money back guarantee, but it is as close  
as I can get!

