

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



Prayer: Our Time Saver

KEY PASSAGES: 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2 | Ephesians 5:15-16 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** 2 Chronicles 20:3-25 | Job 7:6
Psalm 90:12; 119:125-128, 133; 144:4 | Proverbs 3:5-6 | Matthew 14:23 | Mark 1:35 | Luke 5:16; 6:12 | Acts 16:6-9
Philippians 4:6-7 | Colossians 4:2-3 | James 4:14

SUMMARY

Do you ever feel as if you don't have enough time?

Most of us can relate to that thought. Routine chores, distracting activities, and urgent tasks can make our days busy but unproductive. We often have little time left to accomplish God's purposes. The years fly by, and we marvel at how quickly life passes.

The Bible speaks about the limited time each person has to live: "Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow" (Ps. 144:4). How can we make the most of our lives? I believe the secret lies in connecting with our heavenly Father each morning and committing the day to Him. The One who gave us life is best equipped to show us how to invest it. When we walk hand in hand with God, obedient to each command, we will be sure to fulfill all He has planned for us. Prayer is life's greatest time saver.

SERMON POINTS

Prayer in the Life of Jesus

Our Lord worked as a carpenter until He was about 30, but did not begin His ministry until the last three and a half years of His life. That meant He had only a short time to communicate God's love for the world and change human history. Yet, He never hurried or became anxious. The Lord made the most of every opportunity to minister, but He also knew when to retreat and spend time with the Father.

Jesus prayed early in the morning and in the evening; He prayed in front of His disciples and

alone in the wilderness. Before choosing the twelve disciples, He prayed all night (Luke 6:12). Following His example, those who have made the greatest impact for God's kingdom share at least one common trait: They have been men and women of prayer, just as the Savior was.

Prayer as a Time Saver

Talking to God helps us be wise stewards of time because it . . .

- **Provides timely direction:** In emergencies, prayer can give you clear guidance and eliminate confusion. When King Jehoshaphat heard that three armies were on their way to attack Israel, he immediately sought the Lord through fasting and prayer. God gave him a war strategy that resulted in victory (2 Chron. 20:3-25).
- **Prevents wrong decisions:** Prayer can help us avoid costly mistakes, delays, and other long-term difficulties. The apostle Paul wisely changed his plans when the Lord revealed that he was to preach the gospel in Macedonia rather than in the east (Acts 16:6-9). As we follow God's plans instead of our own, we will always experience His blessing.
- **Eliminates worry and anxiety:** Philippians 4:6-7 says, "In everything, by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God . . . will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." As a believer, you don't have to fret; God has everything under control. If you are following His will, you should have great peace. When you feel unsettled spiritually, He may be trying to warn or redirect you. Anxiety is a sign that we are on our schedule, not His.

- **Produces peacefulness:** If you begin each day with God, He will give you supernatural calmness that can increase your productivity. Every morning, as you read the Bible, ask Him to make you sensitive to the Holy Spirit and keep you from sin (Ps. 119:133).
- **Invites God into our activity:** Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.” If you ask, the Father will help you use time wisely.
- **Produces confidence:** When we have clear guidance from God, we can move ahead boldly and quickly. Our heavenly Father knows all things and will guide us to make the most profitable, effective decisions.
- **Eliminates fretting:** We can rest assured that the Lord will give us direction and peace if we take the time to seek Him. But we never reach a point in our lives when we can “take it easy” spiritually. God wants us to enjoy good things in life, but not at the expense of spending time with Him.
- **Sharpens discernment:** Prayer increases our ability to see past the surface to what is going on spiritually. It helps us know God’s will, but not always immediately. I’ve found that sleeping on a question opens my mind to the instruction of the Holy Spirit. Your answer might come immediately or in a week or so. But trust that God will reveal His direction for your life.
- **Gives us energy:** Prayer can rejuvenate us when we are exhausted. Get on your knees before the Father, and spend time talking with Him and reading His Word. The Lord is our strength: it will be unusual if you don’t experience a surge of energy.
- **Prevents distractions:** Each morning, ask God what you are supposed to accomplish that day. That will help you to focus on His priorities for your life and to avoid getting sidetracked with other activities.
- **Reminds us to act now:** Perhaps you have forgotten to do something or have been

procrastinating. Through prayer, God can motivate you to accomplish those tasks.

- **Protects us from discouragement:** Talking to the Lord reminds us of His perspective. How can we be discouraged if our loving heavenly Father is in complete control and has our best interests in mind?
- **Opens doors of opportunity:** Paul asked the Colossians to pray that “God will open up to us a door for the word” (Col. 4:3). Prayer creates opportunities where none existed before. For instance, if you need a job, commit your plans to the Lord. Prepare a resume and look for interviews, but put your trust in God to provide. He will supply your needs if you are walking in obedience to Him.
- **Helps us discern between busyness and fruitfulness:** You and I must be careful to invest our time, energy, and resources in things of eternal value. Don’t say yes to every opportunity: prayerfully consider which ones God has ordained for you to pursue.

RESPONSE

I hope that you will make prayer a priority if you aren’t already doing so. Every morning, commit your day to Him. Ask for His guidance to help you avoid distractions and listen for His voice. There is no better way to invest your time than in prayer. Begin each day on your knees before the Lord, and you will be amazed at how effective and fruitful you can be for His kingdom.

- How often do you spend focused solitary time in conversation with your heavenly Father?
- Do you have a dedicated location in your home where you meet the Lord in prayer?
- How has conversation with the Lord been a help to you in your everyday life?

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