

## Fill Your Home With God

A big thank you to all who helped make this year's Vacation Bible School such a rousing success it was! We had 39 different children in attendance at some point during the four days we held the VBS, and they all had a delightful and very enjoyable time.

We never know the good that comes from making an evangelistic effort such as this, but we certainly should do all we can to plant the seed of God's word. You may think that what you did was not all that important, but that is not true. Everything, regardless of how small you make think it was, is very helpful. This is what Jesus meant when He said in Mark 9:41 and Matthew 25:40 [RSV], "**For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward. Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.**"

As we have studied recently, in the *Book of Deuteronomy* Moses instructed the people of the importance of teaching their children about God. In order for us to do as God has commanded to teach our children, this means we must spend time with our children. The Bible gives us some great insight into how time can become your friend rather than your enemy. Basically, God exists in a realm that is not bound by time or space (Psalm 90:1-4). God does not wear a Rolex, a Times or even a Casio. He is the *Creator* of time, and He is *greater* than time. So, the first step in making time your friend is to totally immerse your life in God. God exists out of time and space, but we do not. Therefore, it is paramount that we do what we can to take advantage of the time we have on this Earth.

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. The balance does not carry over from day to day. Each evening whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day is deleted. What would you do? I imagine you would draw out every cent!

But each of us has **does** have such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning we are credited with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off as lost whatever amount of this you have failed to invest and put into good purpose. It carries over no balance. There are no "rollover minutes" with God!

Our bank of time allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against the "tomorrow." You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today, especially with your family and loved ones.

People live by the clock, because time is important to all of us. Benjamin Franklin said, "Do not squander time, for it is the stuff life is made of."

Many frustrated people seem always to fight the clock, habitually, as a way of life. They stay up late, then they sleep as late as they can and then rush frantically to school or work, gulping down an unhealthy breakfast in the car, applying their make-up (or using a razor) at the stoplight, or talking or texting on their cell phone at the same time.

As I study Jesus' life I am amazed that He never seemed to be in a hurry. Although He was doing the most important job in history (redeeming the world), and although He knew He only had a few years to do it, He never ran. He *made* time to consider the flowers and the birds of the air, and He taught His followers to do the same. He had time to put His hands on the little children and bless them. Time was His friend, and He taught His followers to do all they could to enjoy life to its fullest. It may have seemed to be a new teaching, but in reality Jesus was only reminding them what God had taught them already through His prophets. David stated in Psalm 90 verses 10 and 12, ***10. The years of our life are threescore and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore; yet their span is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away. 12. So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.***

So in light of what we have seen from God's word on the preciousness of time in our lives and the imperative of teaching our children God's ways, let us use the four letters in the word TIME to help us learn its importance.

The first letter is T, and this will stand for **TREASURE**. As we have seen, God says we should treasure time as a valuable commodity. You number your years, but God says every day is so precious we should treasure it and number it also.

To realize the value of **ONE YEAR**, ask a student who failed a grade.

To realize the value of **ONE MONTH**, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

How valuable is **AN HOUR**? Ask the businessman whose flight was delayed an hour and so he missed an important business deal.

How valuable is **ONE MINUTE**? Ask the man who had the heart attack in the restaurant and an EMT happened to be sitting at the next table and CPR saved his life.

How valuable is **A SECOND**? Ask the person who barely missed a head on collision with an oncoming car.

How valuable is **A MILLISECOND**? Ask Milorad Cavic, the Olympic swimmer who lost to Michael Phelps by the smallest of margins in the 100 meter butterfly

stroke at the last Olympics. Time really is valuable. So let us learn a couple of things about what this means for your family:

Treasure every moment that you have! Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift, so that is why it is called the “present!”

You can make more money but you cannot make more time. Have you ever heard the expression, “time is money?” It really is not true. Time is much more valuable than money. It may be hard to make more money, but it can be done. But it is totally impossible to make more time.

A.W. Tozer wrote: “Time is a resource that is nonrenewable and nontransferable. You cannot store it, slow it up, hold it up, divide it up or give it up. You can’t hoard it up or save it for a rainy day – when it’s lost it’s unrecoverable. When you kill time, remember that it has no resurrection.”

So, understand that you should treasure time as the most valuable asset you are given in this world.

The next letter in TIME is I, and this stands for **INVEST**. We use a lot of phrases with time that are not really possible. You cannot buy more time and you cannot really find more time. We speak of making time, but that is impossible, too.

You cannot save time you can only invest it. Time is more valuable than money, but it is like money in that it can be spent and invested. It is different from money, though, because while money can be saved, time cannot. If you do not use it, you lose it. It is gone, and gone forever. In the early 1970s Jim Croce wrote a song that said, “If I could save time in a bottle, the first thing that I’d like to do, is to save every day ‘till eternity passes away – just to spend them with you.” Those are great lyrics, and it would be nice if we could save time, but you cannot. In fact, a few months after he wrote that song, he was tragically killed in a plane crash in Natchitoches, Louisiana at the age of 30. You cannot save time.

We have all kinds of timesaving appliances, such as microwave ovens and washers and dryers. Guys love to take short cuts when driving in order to “save time.” But in reality, this is impossible to achieve. Can anyone show me some of the time you have saved? Where is all this time we have supposedly saved? You cannot save it. You can only spend it and invest it.

Where you invest your time reveals what is most important to you. There are 168 golden hours in each week. The average person will spend about 56 of those hours sleeping, about 24 of those hours in eating and personal hygiene, and about 50 of those hours working or traveling to work. That means there are only about 35 hours a week of “discretionary” time left over. That comes to about 5 hours per day. Where are you investing those hours? For many of us, the bulk

of that discretionary time is spent surfing the Internet, watching television, or reading magazines.

How much of that discretionary time are you devoting to your Lord? How much are you devoting to your family? A study of 1,500 households from the University of Michigan found mothers who work outside the home spend an average of 11 minutes a day on weekdays, and thirty minutes a day on weekends with the children (not including mealtime). Fathers spend an average of 8 minutes a day on weekdays and 14 minutes a day on weekends in different activities with their children.

There is no substitute for investing a large quantity of time with your family. If they are important to you, then you will indicate it by the amount of discretionary time you give them.

The next letter in TIME is M, and it stands for **MANAGE**.

All the money we receive comes from God and we only manage it. We are stewards of what God has blessed us. The same can be said of time. God is the Creator of time, and He alone controls it.

A time management expert was teaching a seminar for executives. He placed a large, clear, open-mouthed jar in front of the group. Next, he put seven or eight large rocks into the jar until it was full. "Is the jar full?" he asked. Everyone nodded yes. Then he took pebbles and filled up the jar with the small rocks until they reached the rim. "Is the jar full?" By now, they did not answer. So, he poured fine sand in the jar. "Is the jar full?" Some nodded, yes. He then proceeded to take a pitcher of water and filled up the jar again. "What's the lesson about time management?" he asked. Hands shot up, and everyone said, "No matter how busy you are you can always fit more things into your schedule." "Wrong!" he replied. "The lesson is this: unless you put the big rocks in first, they never will fit in. You must figure out what the big rocks are for you."

What are the big rocks in your life? Giving time to God? Giving time to your marriage and to your children? If you do not put those big rocks in first, someone else will fill up your jar.

Please understand that every moment is a gift from God that must be managed wisely. There is an entire field of study called "time management." In almost every business in America, consultants are hired to teach busy executives how to better manage their time. Time management is a hot topic. In his book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Stephen Covey writes: "Time management is a misleading concept. You can't really manage time. You can't delay it, speed it up, save it or lose it. No matter what you do time keeps moving forward at the same rate. The challenge is not to manage time, but to manage ourselves."

The Bible uses another word for this. Instead of managing your time, it speaks of “redeeming” the time, which is an even better idea. Paul writes in Ephesians 5:15-16 [RSV], **15. Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, 16. making the most of the time, because the days are evil.**

The phrase **“look carefully then how you walk”** means to be constantly looking around to make the most of every opportunity. Emmett Smith was a great football running back, but he was not the biggest or the fastest, or even the strongest. What he excelled at was running with his eyes open, and he was one of the best at seeing holes as they opened up and then running through them. That is the way we should live our lives, looking for every opportunity to invest time wisely, then darting through them. When an opportunity passes, it cannot be reclaimed. It is gone forever. That is what it means to redeem the time. If you do not manage your time, if you do not redeem your time, someone else will manage it for you.

You cannot save time, or even waste time. You are going to spend it somewhere and invest it in someone. If you do not control your schedule, someone will always be happy to do it for you. Some people complain they just do not have enough time to spend with their family. You have got exactly the same amount of time as everyone else. Your problem is that you just are not managing your time wisely or managing yourself wisely.

The most important time you will invest will be in your family with God. Many of you remember the song, “The Cat’s in the Cradle” by Harry Chapin. Part of it says,

My child arrived just the other day.  
 He came to the world in the usual way.  
 But there were planes to catch and bills to pay.  
 He learned to walk while I was away.  
 He was talking before I knew it, and as he grew  
 He said, “I’m going to be like you, Dad.  
 “You know I’m going to be like you.”

My son turned ten just the other day.  
 He said, “Thanks for the ball, now come on let’s play.  
 “Can you teach me to throw?”  
 I said, “Not today, I’ve got a lot to do.”  
 He said, “That’s OK.”  
 And he walked away and he smiled and he said  
 “You know I’m going to be like you, Dad,  
 “You know I’m going to be like you.”

The final verse says:

I've long since retired and my son's moved away.  
 I called him up just the other day.  
 I said, "I'd like to see you, if you don't mind."  
 He said, "I'd love to, Dad, if I could find the time."  
 "You see, my new job's a hassle and the kids have the flu,  
 "But it's been sure nice talking to you, Dad."  
 "It's been sure nice talking to you."

And as I hung up the phone it occurred to me,  
 He'd grown up just like me.  
 My boy was just like me.

Maybe you have heard the song, but here is the rest of the story. It was actually Harry Chapin's wife, Sandy, who wrote the words to that song after their son, Josh, was born. It became a self-fulfilling prophecy. When their son was 7, Harry was performing 200 concerts a year, and Sandy asked him when he was going to take some time to be with his son. Harry promised to make some time at the end of the summer, but unfortunately, he never made it. That summer, a truck hit Harry's Volkswagen bug and he was killed.

The final letter in TIME is E, and it stands for **ENJOY**. The time you spend with your family should be enjoyable. It should be the best time of your life. Here are a couple of ways to enjoy your family time.

Learn to say "NO" to family time-robbers. There will always be something else to do. There will always be somewhere else you can be, but if you are going to make spending time with your family a priority you are going to have to learn the power of that little two letter word, "NO."

You need to understand that when you say "YES" to family time, then you have already said, "NO" to everything else. But many dads and moms allow interruptions and other demands to detract from their family time. A thousand years from now, what is going to be more important, spending time with your family, or watching some television show? Nobody on his deathbed ever said, "I wish I had spent more time at work."

You need to learn to say, "NO" to some of the things that take you away from your family. And you need to learn to say "YES" to happy memories! Our kids are only going to be with us for a few years, so we must make the most of it. James, the Lord's brother, wrote of the preciousness of life and the importance of pursuing God and His ways and making them your life's purpose when he said in James 4:14 [RSV], "***What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.***"

Take advantage of the time God has given you, and spend it with your family in good memories of pursuing the Lord and His ways!