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# THE RIGHT USE OF OUR TIME

*By*

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# The Right Use of Our Time

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*"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."—Psalm 90: 12.*

This Psalm is an exposition on:

The brevity of life,  
The value of time, and  
The duty to use both of them well.

All we know about our days is that they are few. A merciful Providence conceals their number. And yet, most of us live as if we expected to abide here always. "All men count all men mortal except themselves."

But God has given us just so many days to live. These days are his, not ours. They are ours only to use. They should be used for self-improvement; for service to society, and for the worship and work of God.

To God we shall answer for the manner in which we use his days. We are stewards of time as well as of talents, influence or money. "Thou shalt give an account of thy stewardship."—Luke 16: 2. A steward is one who is placed in a position of trust and responsibility over the affairs of another. The manner in which we use our days is God's affair. It is our responsibility. To use the days allotted to us, wisely and well, is to gain the approval of conscience, the plaudits of society and the approbation of God.

## 'Tis Wicked to Waste God's Days

First, it is a great evil to waste the days which God has allotted to us. It is more sinful to waste God's days than to waste God's dollars. "What greater crime than loss of

time?" To waste time is to waste everything else, character, money, life itself.

1. One who carelessly and thoughtlessly wastes time does himself an injury. It weakens his character. To be prompt and punctual in meeting appointments and keeping engagements is a fine exercise in character development.

2. One who wastes time robs society of the production of wealth to which it is entitled. Man's own creative forces will soon become atrophied by waste of time.

3. One who wastes time is a murderer of his fellowman. To destroy an hour of another man's time is to take that much away from his life.

4. One who wastes time is a suicide. If he wastes only an hour each day he has cut his life short by two years in fifty. One who wastes time is a moral degenerate, a robber, a murderer and a suicide. Strong words? Yes, and true. "Dost thou love life?" asked Benjamin Franklin; "then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of."

### **There Are Many Ways of Wasting Time**

Second, there are many ways in which one, consciously or unconsciously, wastes time. One needs to be on guard constantly against it. Eternal vigilance is the price of life and of time saving as well as of liberty.

1. A lot of time is wasted lying in bed. Some statistician could astound us with figures on the sum total of such loss. "Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man." Poverty of life, poverty of spirit, poverty of intellectuality, poverty of money, poverty of reward eternal, will come upon one who wastes time lying in bed when he should be up

and doing. Men who have moved the world have been light sleepers and early risers.

2. Much time is wasted—some of it worse than wasted—in useless conversation. Mere chatter, senseless gossip, frivolous talk are destructive of our days. Some talkers, like the brook, go on forever, and like the brook again carry very little freight.

3. Reading the daily paper, sometimes two or three a day, from cover to cover, column after column, including the want ads, the funnies, the scandal sheet, and the full details of the latest murder case is a fruitless waste of time. Newspapers are good for the big, important news and for the main editorial view. But no one will go beyond that who values his life and who has any sense of the stewardship of time.

4. Hour after hour at games, such as bridge, rook, checkers, chess, dominoes, etc., is a poor way to use God's golden hours. Occasional relaxation from work is necessary. But when love for games becomes such a strong appetite and passion that it causes one to neglect duty and worthwhile work, then it becomes a sin.

### **Kill Time Just "Sittin' Around"**

5. A lot of time is lost, killed, murdered, by "just sittin' around." Sitting on the porch watching the passersby; sitting in the room gazing into the fire; sitting around hotel lobbies; sitting around corner grocery stores; just sitting around here and there doing nothing for self, for God or for society. "I sit and think, and sometimes I just sit," said an old lady in answer to the query as to how she employed her time.

6. Time is wasted miscellaneously by gadding about from house to house; by automobile riding—"just to pass away the time"; by attending the movies and in various other ways.

The greatest difficulty about this matter of wasting time is that most of the things at which we waste time are perfectly proper and good within themselves and may be done within certain limits.

We sin by our failure to properly apportion our time. We make a budget for the expenditure of our money. We allocate our money to the various things we need or want. That is, we do this, if we are wise and would not waste it and would keep out of debt. For those of us who are employees, our working hours are fixed. They are fixed as to number and as to beginning and ending. Why should we not budget all of our time?

### **Time Should Be Budgeted**

Third, there are great gains, blessings and privileges for those who properly allocate and conserve their time. Broadly speaking, the twenty-four hours in each day—like ancient Gaul—are divided into three parts, namely, eight hours for sleep, eight hours for work and eight hours for recreation. If one works eight hours and sleeps eight hours he is well off during that time. It is in the management of the other eight hours where the rub and responsibility come for him. But the great majority of us are on our own honor and responsibility for the management of all of our time.

1. If we make out a program for the use of our time and adhere to it strictly it will help us in self-discipline. One who is loose about his time is usually loose with his money, loose in morals and loose in character. If we discipline ourselves to be on time at all appointments and to adhere to a time schedule in all things we will find that it develops will-power, self-control and character which help in every other phase of life.

2. Self-improvement, physically, intellectually and spiritually depend upon the proper use of our time.

(1) Most of our sickness could be prevented by wholesome physical exercise which many could take in the time that they waste lying in bed or "just sittin' around."

(2) Many a man has educated himself by studying during his "spare moments." A fine young friend of mine took a course in civil engineering and did all of his studying on the street car. A chauffeur learned French while waiting for his employer to make her calls or attend her parties. A minister reads books while waiting for the car and while waiting in the offices or at the doors where he is calling. The golden moments are too precious to be lost. I read my first book, Irving's Life of Washington, as a plowboy on the farm, while waiting for the teams to eat and rest during the noon hour. There is no excuse for anyone to be uneducated.

### **Spiritual Advancement Possible Through Right Use of Time**

(3) Great spiritual advancement could be made by properly utilizing one's time. Daily Bible reading and prayer is possible to any person who will discipline himself to a wise disposal of all his time. Certainly every Christian should budget a minimum of one-seventh of his time, as he does one-tenth of his money, to the work and worship of God.

3. One's success in life depends upon the manner in which he organizes himself and utilizes his time. No one has ever been known to accomplish any worthwhile task who went at his work haphazard, hit or miss, helter skelter. The one who makes every minute of his time count for the most, using even the odd minutes, or "spare moments," to the best purpose, is the one who succeeds the best.

The big profit of industries is in the by-products. The merchant who buys an article at twenty dollars per dozen and sells them at two dollars apiece has not made any profit un-

til he sells the eleventh article. It was said during the World War that Germany and England were about equal as to resources, equipment and ability. "But," said someone, "England can fight just three minutes longer." It was that extra three minutes that won the war. It is the extra three minutes that win football games, world wars and the battle of life. "He that endureth to the end shall receive the crown."

"Be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee the crown of life."

Enduring to the end! Faithful unto death! What challenging words! Divine words they are, too. Yes, some day, the end, death. Then the most important question will be, not how long, but how well have you lived? David Brainerd died at twenty-nine and yet he set missionary influences in motion which will never die. Borden of Yale was only a strip of a youth, when a fever snatched him away, during his first missionary journey. But his life is influencing thousands of college and university students. Jesus himself was crucified at thirty-three and yet his days are deathless and will never be done until the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord.

Why should one wish to live an hundred years—just to exist? Why should a useless, fruitless life cumber the ground? A monarch was told at his coronation that he had only a short while to live. "I shall reign worthily while I am permitted to reign," he said. "If I am an emperor for only a half-hour in that half-hour I will be every inch an emperor."

Every Christian should be every inch a Christian, every half-hour he is here, living, laboring, loving, not simply existing. Then he will receive the plaudit "well done."