

Lesson Four - Stewardship of Our Time/Opportunities That Are resented to Us

Objective: To become wise stewards of *all* that God has created us to be individually.

Read: Psalm 90

Introduction

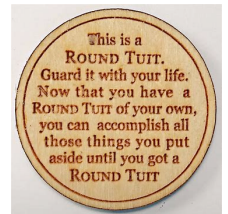
Does the principle of giving apply equally to our time as it does to our money? How much of our time should we set aside for the work of the Lord each week? How are you using the time God has given you?

Time is the heritage of every person. Whether a king or street sweeper, an astronomer or truck driver, a business tycoon or shop assistant, each of us has the same number of hours in a day. Many necessities and opportunities demand much of our day. Our work takes up a large percentage of our life. Being a good husband or wife, father or mother, employer or employee requires time.

As Christians, we have spiritual priorities as well. How many hours or days in a month should we set aside for evangelism and discipleship and the ministries of our church? What about caring for the poor, the orphans, and widows as God's Word commands (James 1 27; Galatians 2:10)?

With all these tasks competing for our time, how can we balance our responsibilities to fulfill our temporal and spiritual duties? As good stewards, we must manage our time wisely. Purposefully giving our time reflects a thankful, obedient attitude and acknowledges God as the source and owner of all that we possess. A voluntary act of worship, purposeful giving teaches us to put God first. A faithful steward serves because he/she has such a heart for God.

As we have seen, everything we have is a gift from God. Every second of every minute, every minute of every hour, twenty-four hours a day belong to Him. Although God's Word does not specifically require us to purposefully give our time, our Lord did command us to put Him first in all things (Matthew 6:31-33). Giving back a percentage of our time enables us to give God priority and assurance that we will fulfill our service to Him.



Bible Study

Psalm 90 is filled with contrasts of the timelessness of God, who is from “everlasting to everlasting,” and the temporal nature of people, who are “dust.” The psalmist looks back and realizes how quickly life has passed by.

- What images does the Psalmist use to remind his readers life is brief? (v. 3-6) How can you relate to what he is saying?
- Given the fact that life passes by so quickly, what is the Psalmist's prayer (v.12)?

Jesus' life lasted just thirty-three years; His ministry consisted of only three of those years. Yet in that short period of time, He impacted the world more than anyone else in history. As we look at Jesus' life, we see Him extremely busy at times, yet always in control. We never see Him rushed or in a panic over how to manage *His time*. Throughout His ministry, Jesus is on a divine timetable (John 2:4; 7:6; 8:30; 8:20; 12:23; 13:1; 17:1), and He was able to accomplish everything that God gave Him to do. Let's take a few moments in the questions below to observe Jesus' *stewardship of His time*.

- Mark 1:21–34 describes a day in the life of our Lord. List all the activities that filled Jesus' day.
- After a draining and demanding day, how did Jesus begin the next day (Mark 1:35)? Why?

- Throughout Jesus' ministry, we see Him setting aside time to spend with His Father. Look up the following verses and comment on the high priority Jesus placed on spending time alone with God (Mark 6:46; Luke 4:16; 6:12; 9:18). We often use the excuse there is not enough time for worship or prayer. What does Jesus' example teach us?
- Jesus had a sense of urgency about His mission and ministry. Read John 4:30–36. What do these words reveal about Jesus' priorities and ours?
- Jesus also took time to nurture the physical and emotional needs of His disciples and Himself. Read Mark 6:31–32. From the context, why did Jesus and the disciples need to get away?
- Why is taking time for one's own needs so important?
- Do most people spend too much time or too little time caring for themselves? How about you?

Personal Reflection

1. Keeping track of how you spend your day can be of great value in evaluating the stewardship of your time. On the chart record the approximate number of hours spent at work, sleep, Christian service, etc? Do this over several weeks.

Are there opportunities to serve?								
	Devotional Life	Commute	Christian Service	Employment	Rest & Relaxation	Domestic duties	Recreation	Social
Monday								
Tuesday								
Wednesday								
Thursday								
Friday								
Saturday								
Sunday								

2. Determine what blocks are wasteful. How could you use them to serve the Lord?

3. List ways to purposefully give of your time that can be worked into your present schedule.