

CCC Fathers Day 2007 FINDING TIME

FOR WHAT'S IMPORTANT

Ephesians 5:15-16

Welcome:

Message: I started back to the gym this week. Working out 5 times this week. Wow I forgot how much I enjoy and how good it made me feel and how hard it is to work into my already over loaded schedule. But this I do know, exercise is important for a healthy body. Spending quality time with your spouse is important to have a healthy marriage. Spending quality time with your kids is important to have a healthy family. Reading my Bible, praying everyday and being in a weekly small group is important for me to have a healthy relationship with God. Maintaining balance between work and play is also important for a healthy life.

My point I am trying to make is this: You already know the right things to do! You know that being in a small group would be good for you. You know that having a ministry is important in life. You know that having a daily quiet time will help you grow spiritually. The problem is you have a hard time finding time for these things that are important.

Today in our society there is more time saving devices than any other time in the history of mankind. Yet we still don't seem to have enough time. We just can't seem to get it all done.

Part of it comes from the myth we are taught on television, that, you can have it all. The truth is you can't have it all. It's the myth that says you can be number one in your career, you can be number one in your family, you can be

number one in the community and in your church and on the golf course -- all at once. You can have it all.

Most of us instinctively know that just isn't true. You can't have it all. You have to make selections and choices in life. But still even when you know the important things in your life, do you ever get to the end of the week and say, "I've put in a lot of energy and effort but still the important things often get left undone." This bothers me enormously that sometimes I can get to the end of the week and the very most important things have kind of gotten shoved to the edge.

We'll God has a word about that for us today. God's word, the Bible has this to say about time management Ephesians 5:15- 16 *"Live life with a due sense of responsibility not as those who do not know the meaning of life but as those who do."* In other words, since you know the meaning of

life -- that you were made by God and for God and you know He has a purpose and plan for your life and you were made to relate to Him -- you should live life with a sense of responsibility. The result of it is, *"Make the best use of your time."*

How do I find time for the things that are really the most important in life? That's what we're here to look at. We need to realize that there are three enemies that thwart you, three barriers that prevent you from finding time for the most important things.

1. Unclear values. When I haven't really figured out what's important, how am I going to know what to do? We get too busy and we forget what's important.
2. Unrealistic expectations. We try to do too much.
3. Unsustained energy. We get tired.

We don't know what's important; we forget to figure that out. Then we try to do too much and we get tired. As a result the important things in life often get left behind. But God's Word always has Good News to those who humble themselves and allow God to guide them. The good news is that the Bible teaches the antidotes -- particularly in the book of Proverbs -- to these three barriers.

1. LINE UP YOUR PRIORITIES

If you want to find time for the important things in life, you have to line up your priorities. This is taught over and over in the book of Proverbs. We have to decide what's important, clarify our values, we have to make choices. The reason being, your time is limited. We all have the exact same amount of time -- 168 hours a week. The bad news is that next week you're not going to have any more time than you did this week. See the only

thing that can change is how you manage it, how you use that time. You can't save time, you can't stretch time, you can't add time -- you just have to manage it. Your life will either be shaped by your priorities or by your pressures. You have to line up your priorities. You figure out what's important. What do I value? What do I want to give my time and give my life for? And you decide what really matters.

The Bible says it's dumb to try to do everything. Proverbs 17:24 *"An intelligent person aims at wise action, but a fool starts off in many directions."* You start off in fifteen hundred directions and there's no cohesiveness to where you're headed in life. You need to discover what's important. Proverbs 12:11 *"It is stupid to waste time on useless projects."* (Husbands, you need to hold onto this verse for when you get that HoneyDo list.)

Learn the difference between the urgent and the important. Everything that's urgent in your life ("I've got to do this now!") is not necessarily important ("This is the important thing to do.") The Urgent and the Important are often two very different things. Just because it has to be done now doesn't mean it's the most important thing.

Ecclesiastes 8:6 *"There is a right time and a right way to do everything, but we know so little."* Circle "right time" and "right way". You may be doing the right thing but not in the right way and so you're wasting time.

What's the solution to all this? Line up your priorities.

Proverbs 16:9 *"We should make our plans, counting on God to direct us."*

The problem is, this doesn't normally happen until a crisis hits. It usually takes a crisis to get us to start thinking about the rest of our life. Financial problems or maybe

even a bankruptcy. Marital problems or even a divorce. A major illness. The death of a loved one. Then you start thinking: "WOW, Life is brief. Life is short. I better start trying to make the most of it." Don't wait for the crisis.

You notice on your message notes there are areas for you to evaluate yourself from one to ten. How would you rate yourself in lining up your priorities? What would your kids say about you? That your career is more important than them. That your hobby is more important. Your off time. I want you to Rate yourself, one to ten. If you'd say, "I don't have any time in my life for anything but work" give yourself a One. If you say, "I'm learning to set up my priorities and I'm starting to learn to abide by them" give yourself a five or six. If you say, "I schedule time for the things that are important on my calendar. I schedule time with my family. I schedule time with the Lord. I

schedule time to be part of a small group here at Calvary. I schedule time for the things that are important besides work on my calendar" give yourself a ten.

2. LIGHTEN UP YOUR ATTITUDE

Relax, let go, lighten up. Why? Because a lot of the stress of your schedule is self imposed. It's the result of your attitude. We try to do too much, we set too many goals, we set unrealistic expectations, and we place far too much emphasis on our career. The result is stress.

Proverbs 12:25 *"Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down."*

More people die from worry than from work. There's more to life than work. Your career is not the Almighty in your life, it's not the more important than anything else.

Everything else just gets shoved over to the side. God intends for life to be enjoyed, not merely endured. We

often get so busy! So busy making a living we don't really live, we don't have time to make a life.

You need to lighten up your attitude. Humor is a great stress reliever. Humor never solves any problems but it does give you new perspective. It helps you handle the things in life when you have a lightened up attitude. Too often we're so busy we don't lighten up and see the humor in the situation.

Proverbs 14:30 is one of my life verses. In the Living Bible it says *"A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life."*

Lighten up and don't take life so seriously.

The first rule of life is Don't sweat the small stuff. The second rule in life is, It's all small stuff. From God's perspective, your big problems aren't that big. Some of you are thinking, "If you knew my problems you wouldn't be able to lighten up!" I'm saying, if you lighten up, your

problems won't be so big. When you look at it from God perspective they aren't... Proverbs 17;22 *"Being cheerful keeps you healthy. It is a slow death to be gloomy all the time."* Medical research confirms this verse. There are positive chemical changes that happen in your body when you laugh. When you laugh, it produces T cells. T cells increase your immunity. It produces endorphines which are nature's pain killers. There are all kinds of positive benefits when you laugh.

So today, to improve your health, I thought I'd read some church bulletin bloopers – The first one is in a church bulletin it said,

- This being Easter, we've asked Mrs. Lewis to come forward and lay an egg on the altar.
- For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

- Next Sunday, a special collection will be taken to defray the cost of a new carpet. Those wishing to do something on the new carpet, come forward and do it.
- A bean supper will be held Thursday evening in the church hall and music will follow.
- At the evening liturgy tonight, the sermon topic will be "What is hell?" Come early and listen to the choir practice.
- Next Sunday Mrs. Vincent will be soloist for the morning service. The pastor will then speak on "It's a Terrible Experience". .
- Don't let worry kill you off. Let the church help.
- The low self esteem support group will meet Thursday at 7 p.m. Please use the back door.

Did you know that your entire muscular system relaxes when you laugh? Have you ever laughed so hard you got weak? Limp?

God says if you want to make time for the important things in life, you've got to line up your priorities and you have to lighten up your attitude. You've got to learn to see humor in life. That jerk who runs you off in traffic on the way to work, laugh at him – then pray for him... Poor guy is clueless to what life is about...

The Bible says that life is meant to be enjoyed, not just endured. It will lighten the load and sure make the problem a whole lot easier

Rate yourself on this one. Do you need to lighten up your attitude? Is work the only thing that's important in your life? Does it keep you at the grindstone so you don't enjoy the people in your life? Are you so caught up in making a

living that you're not making a life? Are you taking time for the people around you?

3. LOOK UP TO GOD

The only way you're going to get done the important things in life is if you ask Jesus Christ for help. Proverbs 10:27 *"Reverence for God adds hours to each day."* Reverence means to take God seriously, put God first. How many of you would like to have more hours in your day? All of us would. There's the answer. *"Reverence for God adds hours to each day."* The reason why we don't lighten up our attitude and then look up to God is we take ourselves way too seriously and we don't take God seriously enough. That is the root behind many if not most of your problems in your life. You take yourself far too seriously and you don't take God seriously enough. You don't reverence Him

-- that means you don't put Him first, You don't take Him seriously in your life.

You think that the solution is more time. "If I just had a few more hours in each day, then I'd get it all done." God says, "No, you don't need more time in your day." God doesn't say you need more hours, more time. He says, "You need more time with Me. The problem why you're all stressed out and you can't get it all done, you need more time with Me, God says." *"Reverence for God adds hours to each day."*

Since this is Father's Day, a word to you dads. There are many things that compete for our attention. There are many things that drain our energy. There are many things that call for our creativity and take every ounce of effort we have in life. Many times you come home from work wasted, beat, tired, out of steam, you have no strength to do

the important things with your kids. You have no strength to do the important things with your wife. You have no strength to read the Bible.

Where do you get that kind of strength when you're worn out? *"Reverence for God gives a man deep strength."* Spending time with God is the secret of strength in your life. You need to get alone with Him everyday. You ask God for wisdom to make the right choices and line up your priorities and lighten up your attitude. And you ask God for strength to do the things that really matter when the world is telling you about things that don't matter. That's the secret of strength. When we study the life of Jesus, you find that no matter how busy He was, He took time to pray. You say, "I know it's good to pray. I know it's good to read my Bible. I just don't have time." Then you're just too busy and you'll never have time.

God put you on this earth to do a certain number of things. God would not give you more things to do than He gives you the time to do it. God would not expect more of you and then not give you the time and energy to do it. If you're not getting the important things done in your life, it means one of two things.

1. You're doing some things in your life that you shouldn't be doing. You're doing some things that God never intended you to do.

2. You're doing the right things, you're just doing them the wrong way. You're not being efficient, effective. You're not managing your time wisely.

God promises to bless you when you put Him first in your life. Proverbs 3:5-6 *"Trust the Lord completely. In everything you do, put God first and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success."* This principle, that

whatever you put God first in, is the principle behind tithing. It applies in your time as well. The Bible says the purpose of tithing is to teach us to put God first in every area of our lives. Tithing is the principle that the first ten percent of all that I make goes back to God. If I make ten bucks, a dollar goes back to God – and I give it back to Him in gratitude for what He's done and in faith that He's going to take care of my future.

God says, "If you put Me first in your finance, I will make the rest of your money go further than if you kept it all for yourself. The real issue in tithing is, "Do I believe God? Do I believe all the promises where God says, if I put Him first in my money, He'll take care of all my bills and help me out? Do I really trust God?" That's the issue. It's the same thing with your time. God says "If you put Me first with your time, I will make the rest of your time

stretch and go further than you thought possible." You say, "God, I don't have time for a daily quiet time. I don't have time for a small group. I don't have time to study the Bible." God says "Ok, you're on your own then in terms of time. See if you can make it stretch." On the other hand, if you say, "God, because You are my God and because the most important thing is knowing You, then I'm going to put You first in my time" and watch what He does with everything else. He promises to bless it.

God not only promises to bless us when we give back to Him, but He also promises to bless us when we give back to others. Monetarily or with time. Proverbs 22:9 *"A generous man will himself be blessed."* You cannot out give God. The more generous you are, the more God blesses your life.

The same is true with time. The more you give your time away to help other people, God will make sure that your needs get met...

My question is: Who do you need to give back to before it's too late? Who do you need to make time for in your schedule before it's too late?

Life is short and you're not guaranteed a tomorrow, much less next week. You're not guaranteed that the people in your life are going to be with you tomorrow or even next week. Whatever is important in life, whatever is the right thing to do, whatever you're intending to do because you know that it's the good thing to do, do it now! Don't wait. Don't wait until your parents have died. Don't wait until your kids have grown up. Don't wait until your spouse's heart has grown cold. Do it now. If you don't do it now, you may not ever get to do it. Whatever it is, make that

phone call today. Write that letter today. Offer that kindness now. Show that expression of love now. Tell somebody about Jesus now. They may not be around tomorrow. Tell them about Jesus now.

Every day you're exchanging your life for something. The Bible says *"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* Every day you're exchanging your life for something. Your time is your life. Every time you invest your time for something, you're exchanging your life. Your time is your life. Some people are exchanging their life for television. Some people are exchanging their life for talk radio. Some people are exchanging their life for a silly little ball. Some people are exchanging their life for fame that isn't going to last until five years from now. On and on. Every time you have an activity you ought to ask yourself, "Is this worth giving my life to it?" because

that's exactly what you're doing when you give some of your time. Is it worth giving my life for? If you want to find time for the most important things in life, you need to give the best you have to the highest you know and you need to do it now.

The tragedy is some people go all through life and miss the most important thing. What is the most important thing in life? *"Some people have missed the most important thing in life -- they don't know God."* You miss this and you miss the whole point of life!

1 Timothy says, *"Some people have missed the most important thing in life. They don't know God."* Even Christians don't really know God because they're not spending time in His word, reading it, listening to Him, worshipping Him.

It all boils down to this: What are you living for? More important, Who are you living for? Tell me the answer to that question and I can tell you instantly the level of stress in your life. Tell me who you're living for. If you're living for yourself, the stress is high. If you're living for your reputation, your stress is high. If you're living for your retirement, your stress is high. Who are you living for?

Here's a prayer each of us can pray, Psalms 90:12 *"Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should."*

This is a lousy sermon title. You ought to cross out the first word. It's not finding time for what's important. It's a matter of making time. You're never going to find the time. The devil will make sure you're too busy. You have to make time for the things that are important in life -- God

and the people He's placed around you. You've got to make time for ministry, make time to be in a small group, make time to read His word, make time to get in a Bible study, make time to share your faith. But those are the things that are going to last.

These three points we talked about this morning -- Line up your priorities, Lighten up your attitude, Look up to God -- you can pray those three points for the rest of your life.

Every morning, you can get up and say, "God, help me, today, to line up my priorities. Help me, today, to lighten up my attitude. You're God, I'm not. Help me, to look up to You, because I can't get it done and I can't stay focused and I'll find myself using time in the wrong way unless You help me." It starts with a decision what you're going to make time for.

Prayer:

Would you pray this prayer: "Dear Father in heaven, help me line up my priorities, to sit down, think through what's most important. Help me to make a Don't Do list of things You just haven't called me to, that are less than worthy of my life. Help me to exchange my life for the right things. Jesus Christ, help me to lighten up my attitude, to realize that You meant for life to be enjoyed and that You put the children in my family or spouse or friends or relatives for a reason. They're not just a responsibility, but they're a gift. Help me to enjoy them. Most of all, help me to look up to You. I can't do it all. Help me to listen to You daily, to put You first, to pray over my schedule in my quiet time, to read Your word for wisdom so that I can know that my life matters and that I haven't wasted it." If you've never invited Jesus Christ into

your life, do that right now. Say, "Jesus Christ come into my heart and life and be my manager. Direct me from here on out. You call the shots. I want to live for You and ask You to save me. In Your name I pray. Amen.

FINDING TIME FOR WHAT'S IMPORTANT
Father's Day
Ephesians 5:15-16

"Live life with a due sense of responsibility, not as those who do not know the meaning of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time..." Ephesians 5:15-16 (Ph)

I. LINE UP _____

"An intelligent person aims at wise action, but a fool starts off in many directions." Proverbs 17:24 (GN)

"... It is stupid to waste time on useless projects."
Proverbs 12:11b (GN)

"There is a right time and a right way to do everything, but we know so little!" Ecclesiastes 8:6 (GN)

"We should make our plans, counting on God to direct us."
Proverbs 16:9 (GN)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

II. LIGHTEN UP _____

"Anxiety in a man's heart weighs it down." Proverbs 12:25 (GN)

"A relaxed attitude lengthens a man's life." Proverbs 14:30 (LB)

"Being cheerful keeps you healthy. It is a slow death to be gloomy all the time." Proverbs 17:22 (GN)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

III. LOOK UP _____

"Reverence for God adds hours to each day..." Proverbs 10:27 (LB)

"Reverence for God gives a man deep strength." Proverbs 14:26
(LB)

"Trust the Lord completely... in everything you do, put God first, and He will direct you and crown your efforts with success."
Proverbs 3:5-6 (LB)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

"Some people have missed the most important thing in life -- they don't know God." 1 Timothy 6:21 (LB)

"Teach us to number our days and recognize how few they are; help us to spend them as we should." Psalms 90:12 (LB)