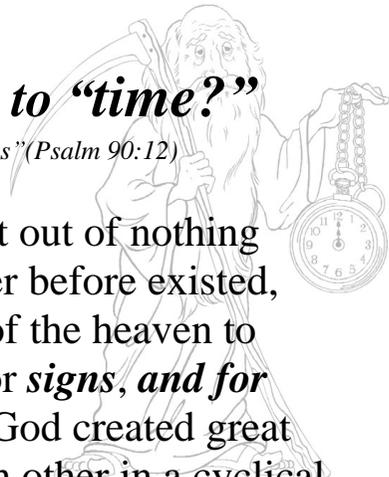




How do we relate to “time?”

“so teach us to number our days” (Psalm 90:12)



The LORD God brought out of nothing something that had never before existed, “God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for ***signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years***” (Gen 1:14). God created great lights and commanded them to orbit around each other in a cyclical motion to mark off specific periods; thereby He established time!

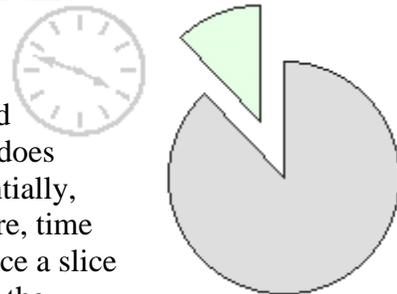
Man was created to operate within this element known as time, “in ***process of time*** it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD” (Gen 4:3).

Clearly, the LORD God uses time in His dealings with humanity. Notice how God spoke to Abraham with respect to time, “my covenant ***will I establish*** with Isaac, which Sarah shall bear unto thee ***at this set time in the next year***” (Gen 17:21). God set out to bring about His promises to Abraham using His cyclical apparatus that marks off time. Through that period, God essentially initiated major changes in Abraham’s life!

It is clear that God uses the agency of time as He causes beneficial change to take place. However, God Himself is not bound by the constraints of time, “***I am the LORD, I change not***” (Mal 3:6). We can conclude therefore that physical time is a necessity in order to cause change in human beings.

There is nothing more important to us than time! Time is the measure of our human lives; we measure everything using the elements in time. The quality of our lives is determined by the effective use of our time. Every single one of us has the exact same 24 hours in the day! Time is a quantity that we all share in common. We all operate by the same unit of time. Time is unlike money or body fat or intelligence. We all experience the same amount of time! You may not realize it at first, but what you have done with your time in the past is exactly what has made you what you are today! If you spent all of your time focusing on sports you became a sports buff. If you spent all of your time watching soap operas your life became a soap opera. If you spent all of your time practicing music you will become a musician. We become whatever we continually spend our time doing.

God created all things and placed humanity within the limited and finite confines of this entity called time. However, God does not live within the limitations and restrictions of time! Essentially, time could be defined as an interruption in eternity! Therefore, time is a piece of eternity which has been carved out; it is in essence a slice taken out of eternity. Eternity cannot be measured; therefore the illustration of time being a slice out of eternity is not entirely correct.

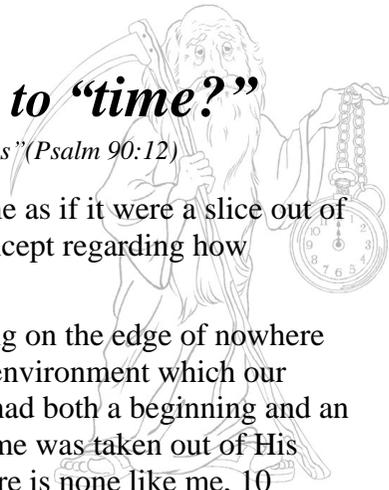




How do we relate to “time?”

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However, if we will think of time as if it were a slice out of eternity we can get a clearer concept regarding how humans are shaped by time.

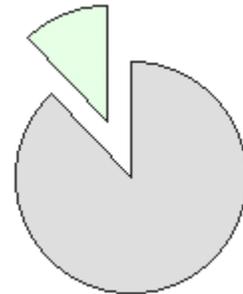


In essence, eternity is timelessness! God stepped out on nothing on the edge of nowhere before anything ever existed. In that bizarre and unfathomable environment which our finite minds can barely grasp, God created a mechanism which had both a beginning and an end and He called that entity, “time.” This mechanism called time was taken out of His existence (*eternity*) and it was set in motion, “I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done” (Isa 46:9-10). However, God does not live in that entity which He had created. He lives in *eternity*! One of His names is (*Yahweh 'Eel Owlaam*) which in the Hebrew means “*the Eternal* or the *Everlasting God*.”



We have already observed from the Book of Genesis that God created the elements which would frame time, “God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and **let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years**” (Gen 1:14). God created and set in motion these luminous heavenly bodies that disperse light, and He set them in the heavens that they would be “**for seasons, and for days, and years.**” God saw the intrinsic value in these heavenly bodies, “And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness” (Gen 1:17-18). Notice how the end of that verse reveals God attitude toward these heavenly bodies that were used to mark off time, “**and God saw that it was good.**”

The heavenly bodies that mark off time are resplendent with orderliness, harmonics and rhythm; they move in exact motion and are extremely predictable. We humans can learn noble lessons from the predictability of these heavenly cycles. We will focus more on this concept later in the Bible Study.



The Bible teaches that the essence of “time” proved to be a beneficial entity to God’s purposes! He would use it as a measurement for all physical things. God planned to create humanity and through this entity called “time,” He could remove the living human family out from eternity! God did not want this human family, which He was planning to create in His own image, to live in eternity until the man was prepared for the requirements of living in eternity! The very fact that God was equipped to remove man out from eternity is proof that the Creator was not surprised by the fall of Adam. Man, (*without the “tree of life”*) was created to live within the bounds and the limits of time!

In actual fact, it requires less character to live in time than to live in eternity! When we live in time we have the ability to experience change. In essence, through change we can move from that which is unprofitable toward that which is beneficial. Through the mechanism of time, we literally change our physical circumstances; we can grow in character; we can develop understanding never before known; we can “**grow in grace, and in the knowledge** of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18). In stark contrast to living in time when one exists in eternity things never change. We have already observed that while God



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uses time for change, God Himself is not bound by the constraints of time; therefore He does not change, “I am the LORD, **I change not**” (Mal 3:6). Paul teaches us

regarding the glorified nature of our Savior, “Jesus Christ **the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever**” (Heb 13:8). Essentially, Jesus never changes! Now consider this powerful concept about eternity: **Whatever you take with you into eternity, you will have for eternity!** If you take a headache into eternity, you will have a headache for eternity! If you take resentment into eternity, you will have resentment for eternity! If you take joy into eternity, you will have joy for eternity! And let’s face it, eternity lasts forever!

There is a vast difference between “time” and “eternity!” This is why Paul wrote, “our light affliction, which is but for a **moment** (Paul used the word “moment” to describe the shortness of time.), worketh for us a far more exceeding and **eternal** (Now Paul contrasts that short moment with eternity.) weight of glory; 18 While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for **the things which are seen are temporal**; but **the things which are not seen are eternal**” (2 Cor 4:17-18). Jesus taught a remarkable lesson about an unquenchable fire, “if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:43-44). I used to think, “Well no one can quench that fire; but it will eventually burn itself out.” However, that concept was incorrect because that specific fire is an eternal fire! The scriptures teach that there is an eternal fire, “It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever” (Isa 34:10). The point is that anything that enters into eternity last forever!

We have heard the story over and over that Adam and His wife disobeyed God. However we may have missed a relevant point, “now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the **tree of life**, and eat, and **live for ever**: 23 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the **tree of life**” (Gen 3:22-24). God lovingly protected the man from getting to the “tree of life” (*this was a tree which produced fruit leading to eternal life!*), “**lest** (This word conveys an “exclusion” which clearly means something that God did not want to happen to the human family!) he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, **and live for ever!**” God obviously did not want the man to live forever in the condition of being a sinner! God was protecting the man from living forever **under the condition of sin!** God protected man **as a sinner** from eating an eternal fruit! He did this so that Adam would not be an **eternal sinner**. God set up these conditions so He could **save** Adam from his sin! That is why we read that Jesus was, “the Lamb slain **from the foundation of the world**” (Rev 13:8). The very fact that Jesus was slain “**before the foundation of the world**” gives us evidence that Jesus obviously lives outside of the time domain! He, spoke of experiencing things which are obviously beyond time’s normal constraints, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, **Before Abraham was, I am**” (John 8:58).

God uses time as an agent for change! One of the best statements that we humans can ever make is, “I used to _____!” You can fill in that blank with whatever is true for



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“so teach us to number our days” (Psalm 90:12)

you: “be broke;” “be sick;” “be an alcoholic;” “have a temper;” etc. Whatever ill condition that we experience will **not last forever** as long as we live in time! Problems

don’t last forever, “weeping may endure **for a night**, but joy cometh in the morning” (Ps 30:5). As long as we are living in time (*days, weeks, months, and seasons*) there is the definite hope for the morning! We may have to live through difficult nasty seasons; however, the existence of time continually ensures to all of us that our present experience is never permanent! This fact alone ought to be a great encouragement to all of us.

Everything in time has a season; this is an irrevocable law established by God, “To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven” (Eccl 3:1). Seasons come and go; however, one thing is for certain, seasons end. Time allows for the closure of seasons: I used to work at a school district; I used to have small children; I used to live in Pueblo, Colorado. However, seasons change as time brings closure to seasons. Time ensures that we may continually move further and further away from anything that is not profitable or beneficial. Time is a healer! There was a time when I could not speak of how my mother’s cancer had taken her life without being overcome by a strong feeling of sorrow and mourning. Today, I can speak of that event and not feel the same pain.

Without time there is no “past,” “present,” or “future!” Time creates these three phases of our existence. Time separates our present from our history; however and more importantly, time allows us to formulate our destiny! ***Out of our choices today, we can effect the tomorrows of our future and thereby create whatever histories we choose!*** Reread that statement! Can you begin to recognize merely a slice of that eternal nature within us? If you are not as slim today as you may have wished last year, I have good news for you! You can choose today what you want to become next year. And in two years you can look back on next year’s accomplishment as a beneficial history out of your past. Time gives you the power to choose any new history in your future that you may long to experience!

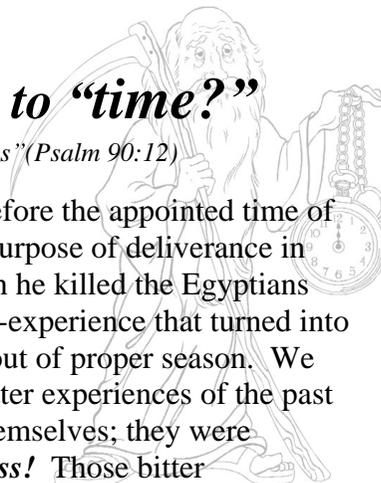
We must understand the purpose of time! We have already read, “To **every thing** there is a **season**, and a **time to every purpose** under the heaven” (Eccl 3:1). Every **purpose** is attached to a season and a time. This means that there is a purpose for you in your life; you have a purpose to fulfill. There is a time and a season for **everything**! The car you drive is only for a season; one day that season will be gone. The house you live in is only for a season; one day that season will be gone. There is a time and a season for the job that you presently hold; one day that season will be gone. These things are true of “***EVERYTHING!***”

This changing seasons concept should bring you great comfort and confidence. Everything that does not exist in eternity endures **only for a season**. This means that you cannot loose with God! God has laid a burden upon every man and woman. He has made a time of maturity for everything, “I have seen the travail, (*burden*) which God hath given to the sons of men to be exercised in it. 11 He hath made every thing beautiful (*mature*) in his (*its*) time” (Eccl 3:10-11). Let’s examine those two verses more closely. The New King James Version is probably a more expressive translation for our purposes, “I have seen the God-given task with which the sons of men are to be occupied. 11 He has made everything beautiful (*mature*) in its time” (Eccl 3:10-11). Have you ever had the desire to eat a piece of fruit that was plucked out of season? You know what I mean; fruit that is still green and unripe. How does that fruit present itself to you? Obviously, it is bitter! Nature teaches us



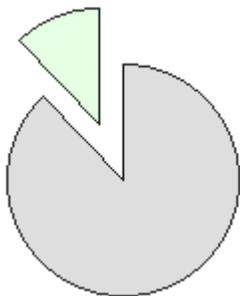
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that there is always bitterness before the appointed time of ripening! Moses had the right purpose of deliverance in mind but the wrong timing when he killed the Egyptians who beat the Hebrew slaves. Have you ever lived through a life-experience that turned into bitterness? Most likely it was because that life experience was out of proper season. We all have lived through this kind of an experience. Any of our bitter experiences of the past (*which were not sin*) may not have necessarily been wrong in themselves; they were probably just out of season! ***Sin has its own distinctive bitterness!*** Those bitter experiences may have been our desires expressing themselves out of season. Our urges are not necessarily signs for us to move forward; rather, the urge is probably a sign for us prepare for movement. The desire in and of itself is not necessarily an instruction; it may simply be advice to prepare for the future. Everything has “*its*” time! We must become aware that we need to learn to operate properly within seasons and cycles. Fruit trees do not produce fruit during winter! Even if somehow a tree would produce fruit during the winter, the fruit could not survive the cold! So too, we humans must wait for proper seasons of fruitfulness and a season is by definition a prolonged period of fruitfulness.

Now let’s continue with the verse from the Book of Ecclesiastics which we started with earlier, “also he hath set the world (*eternity*) ***in their heart***, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh ***from the beginning to the end***” (Eccl 3:10-11). God set’s eternity in the hearts of men! Now this is a real paradox. Let’s try to understand this. God has essentially taken our “finished life” and backed up and placed that “end” in our “beginning!” We actually live this life with an innate ability to formulate pictures of our ultimate purpose. For this reason we have dreams! Essentially, we have eternity trapped inside of us. Remember that time is merely a slice out of eternity!



We have the ability to dream; therefore, at times we have the ability to perceive our end that is trapped within. What we need to do is to take that image of our end and “seasonalize” it; what do I mean by that? The Bible teaches that, “To every thing there is a season, and ***a time to every purpose*** under the heaven” (Eccl 3:1). No one who journeys arrives at his/her end without going through the necessary middle steps. Knowing this helps us to realize that we do not need to push in order to reach our purpose. Our appointed times will naturally arrive, just as everything is made ripe in its season. We simply need to keep on doing the thing that is right for the present season. Since there is no need to hurry, we shouldn’t do anything negative in an attempt to get to something positive! As seasons change, maturation naturally takes place. Next we need to realize that our purpose will protect us!

The New International Version renders a verse from the book of Job in a rather profound manner; the verse says, “***Man’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months*** and have ***set limits*** he cannot exceed” (Job 14:5) (NIV). God has set a limit on our months and days. David wrote, “So teach us to number (*account for*) ***our days***, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Ps 90:12). What does it mean that we should “account” for our days? Let’s develop this concept more completely. Notice what Jesus told His mother when pressed, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? ***mine hour is not yet come***” (John 2:4). Many other times during His ministry Jesus said that His “time had not



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yet come.” This means that He recognized that a specific timeframe was associated with everything that He did.

During those instances when he spoke of His time not yet

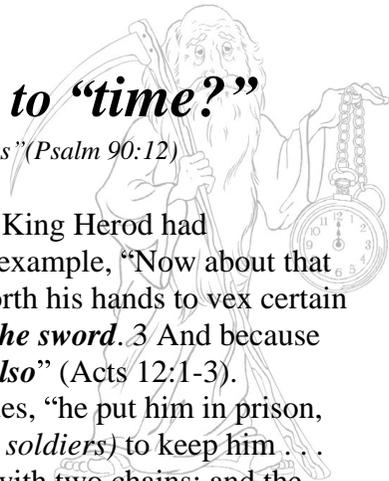
having come, He realized that there was a proper time for doing certain specific things. In one instance, Jesus actually walked through the midst of a crowd, which was intent upon throwing him off of a cliff. He was supernaturally able to walk through the people because it was not His time to die. He had a **purpose** to fulfill, “to everything there is a **purpose!**” Jesus envisioned His end or His purpose; He understood that His **purpose** was to come to the earth and to die as a sacrifice for mankind! His purpose could not be accomplished by being thrown off of a cliff by some hastily assembled and unruly crowd. Consider, Jesus was supernaturally protected so that He could perform His purpose; is this true of others?

Let’s observe an example during the lifetime of the Apostle Paul. After Paul’s arrest in Jerusalem, he was placed on a ship that was bound for Italy; Paul had been sent to Rome so he could stand trial before Caesar. Along their way in the seas near the island of Crete as they sailed close by a place called “the Fair heavens,” Paul warned the centurion and the ship’s owner that their voyage was doomed, “Sirs, **I perceive that this voyage will be with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.** 11 Nevertheless the centurion believed the master and the owner of the ship, more than those things which were spoken by Paul” (Acts 27:10-11). Unsurprisingly, as Paul had warned there arose a tempest that caused the ship great harm. As they were about to abandon ship Paul said, “Sirs, **ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete,** and to have gained this harm and loss. 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for **there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship.** 23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, **Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar:** and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer” (Acts 27:21-25). Paul encountered an angel who gave him a message concerning his Godly purpose to stand before Caesar. Because Paul knew that God had appointed him (*given him a purpose*) to stand before Caesar, he naturally realized that God would supernaturally protect him until he literally stood before the ruler of the Roman empire. Now notice the very first thing that happened to Paul after escaping the shipwreck, “And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. 2 And the barbarous people shewed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. 3 And **when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks, and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand.** 4 And when the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they **said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.** 5 And he **shook off the beast into the fire,** and felt no harm. 6 Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but **after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god**” (Acts 28:1-6). Paul survived the venomous viper because he had not yet fulfilled his purpose, “**thou must be brought before Caesar.**” God would not allow even a venomous viper to alter His sovereign will. In essence, it was impossible for Paul to die until he had accomplished his God appointed purpose! Are there others who escape certain death because they had not yet fulfilled their purpose?



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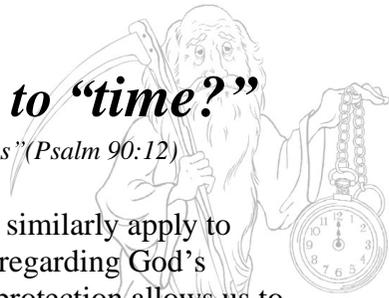
Notice Peter’s experience when King Herod had determined to martyr him as an example, “Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And **he killed James the brother of John with the sword.** 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, **he proceeded further to take Peter also**” (Acts 12:1-3). Obviously, Peter was in deep trouble; notice as the story continues, “he put him in prison, and delivered him to four quaternions of soldiers (*sixteen armed soldiers*) to keep him . . . the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. 7 And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, **Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals.** And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me” (Acts 12:4-8). The thing that we need to notice is that Peter appears to have a rather nonchalant attitude. Herod had planned to kill him the next day as he had recently killed James (*John’s brother*). What did Peter know that made him so comfortable? In order to get the answer we need to look to Jesus’ words when He actually prophesied how Peter would one day die, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but **when thou shalt be old**, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, **and another shall gird thee**, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19 This **spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God.** And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me” (John 21:18-19). Peter was not fearful of dying at the hand of Herod because Jesus had told him “**when thou shalt be old!**” As a confirmation that Peter was not going to die at his relatively young age, notice Jesus’ prophesy from verse 18 above, once again regarding the day of Peter’s death, “and **another shall gird thee**, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.” Instead of another girding and carrying Peter on that night notice what the angel told Peter, “And the angel said unto him, “**Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals.** And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and **follow me**” (Acts 12: 8). This was not Peter’s day to die; he still had a specific purpose from God to fulfill. As a result, Peter’s life was secure in God’s hands in the same sense as the Apostle Paul. God did not protect them just because they were apostles; rather, he protected them because they understood and were deeply involved in their Godly purpose!

There is yet another detail with respect to Godly protection that we should consider. Notice how individuals of purpose influence God’s protection over their companions! We have Biblical examples where those around the person of purpose are likewise protected. Paul saved the lives of those in the ship with him. Remember Paul’s words above, “be of good cheer: for **there shall be no loss of any man’s life among you, but of the ship.**” Likewise, when Jesus was on the ship during a storm, notice His reaction, “he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm” (Mark 4:38-39). Jesus had not yet completed His purpose. He was supposed to be sacrificed as the Passover Lamb of God; not die in some drowning accident! Therefore, whenever in danger, His life was absolutely secure along with those who were with Him!



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Many do not realize that we can similarly apply to ourselves these same principles regarding God’s supernatural protection. God’s protection allows us to fulfill our God given purpose! To discover our purpose, we need to capture a clear vision of why God placed us upon the earth. What is God’s purpose for us; and, what does that purpose have to do with time? Let’s recall Job’s words in this regard, “***Man’s days are determined; you have decreed the number of his months*** and have set limits he cannot exceed. 6 So look away from him and let him alone, ***till he has put in his time like a hired man***” (Job 14:5-6) (NIV). God “hired” us to perform some specific purpose to accomplish! We have something specific to do! We should all be asking ourselves the question, “What has God figuratively hired me to do?”

What is your purpose? Do you know your purpose? Do you want to know your purpose? David taught that we should learn how to account for our days, “So teach us to number (*account for*) our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Ps 90:12). Learning our purpose will require God’s wisdom. We have the ability to plan our future, “Because to every purpose there is time” (Eccl 8:6). So what should we do to discover our purpose?

We need to realize that Paul taught us that we should, “***Walk in wisdom*** toward them that are without, (*the non-believers*) ***redeeming the time***” (Col 4:5). This means that we need to be careful how we live “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, ***but as wise, 16 Redeeming the time***, because the days are evil. 17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but ***understanding what the will of the Lord is*** (*The scripture reveals that we can know God’s purposes for your life!*)” (Eph 5:15-17). It is significant that this passage indicates that there is a relationship between “***redeeming the time***” and discovering ***our Godly purpose!*** People with purpose are driven and they make the most of their allotted time!

So how do I make the most of my time? How can I redeem the time? The greatest enemies of time are procrastination and distraction. It is so easy for us to procrastinate (*or put off the important*). Likewise it is so easy to get distracted from doing what is important! The best way to get someone off of their Godly path is to give them an alternate “good” path. The greatest enemy of right is not necessarily always evil; it can also be something good. The problem is that when we are doing something good we may not be doing the right thing. Being preoccupied with doing something good at the expense of doing something right is unwise! We should never sacrifice right for good. Not everything good is always right; but everything right is always good! The right is what we were born to do; it is our purpose. However, the good is what people want us to do. We should never allow ourselves to be too busy that we are not doing the right thing. Always remember Jesus’ words, “***The thief*** cometh not, but for ***to steal***” (John 10:10). Every minute of every hour that we have not spent on our Godly purpose is time that has been stolen from us!

Stephen Covey wrote a book entitled, “*The Seven Habits of a Highly Effective People.*” One of the book’s major teachings is that effective people do not allow themselves to get distracted doing urgent things instead of important things! We must learn to realize what is important for us! Once we know what is important for us we will focus on doing those things that are beneficial toward our purpose! Paul wrote, ““Everything is permissible for me’ -but not everything is beneficial. ‘Everything is permissible for me’ -but ***I will not be mastered by anything***” (1 Cor 6:12) (NIV). We need to have Paul’s same attitude; nothing



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apart from our purpose should master our time. Can you think of things that are permissible but not beneficial? One example is we can spend a great deal of time reading the

wrong Christian books! Remember, satan does not necessarily try to get the Christian to do something evil; he is satisfied to merely get us distracted from our ultimate purpose.

We must discover what we were born to do! If we don't know where we are going, any road will take us there! We need to learn where we are going; this will set our direction and keep us from wasting time! The “beneficial” is that which takes us toward our ultimate purpose in life. There are people and activities in our lives that are not beneficial for us! We must choose whom we will allow to take up our time! We must choose to use our time in the context of our ultimate purpose! Anything that gets us off of track is not beneficial!

So how are we supposed to move ahead? God gave us time or changing seasons so that we have the ability to start again! Paul was focused on his purpose, “***I press toward the mark*** for the prize of the ***high calling*** of God in Christ Jesus. 15 ***Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded . . . let us mind the same thing.*** 17 Brethren, ***be followers together of me***” (Phil 3:14-17). When we focus our direction we set the right course for ourselves, “I have fought a good fight, ***I have finished my course***, I have kept the faith: 8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only” (2 Tim 4:7-8). Like Paul, we will accomplish our Godly purpose!

In a nutshell, we will discover our purpose through planning and prayer. We can begin by realizing that God is a planner, “But ***the plans of the LORD*** stand firm forever, ***the purposes of his heart*** through all generations” (Ps 33:11) (NIV). That passage teaches us that God's plans and purposes are related! Essentially, God plans His work and works His plans, “The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The ***plans of His heart*** from generation to generation” (Ps 33:11) (NASU).

Like God, we are supposed to be planners too, “May he give you ***the desire of your heart*** and make ***all your plans succeed***” (Ps 20:4) (NIV). God gave us the ability to plan, “***To man belong the plans of the heart***” (Prov 16:1) (NIV). We humans are given Godly desires in our hearts. We need to plan out that desire and establish the plan under God's overall direction. God must be the core of our overall planning, “***In his heart a man plans his course***, but ***the LORD determines his steps***” (Prov 16:9) (NIV). Everyone plans, but only we Christians invite God into our planning, “***Many are the plans in a man's heart***, but it is ***the LORD's purpose that prevails***” (Prov 19:21) (NIV). Essentially, since our plans come from God, they must ultimately parallel His own plans. God's plans come to us in a secret way, “I hadn't told a soul about the plans for Jerusalem ***that God had put into my heart***” (Neh 2:11) (TLB). God is the source of our inspiration, “Then ***I told them about the desire God had put into my heart***” (Neh 2:18) (TLB). Finally, set in your mind and heart that it is only God's will which can form your purposes. Essentially, we want to validate our plans through God, “***Turn me away from wanting any other plan than yours.*** Revive my heart toward you” (Ps 119:37) (TLB).

Through planning, prayer and time, just like drawing water from a deep well, we can discover our personal purpose that was established by God, “The ***purpose in a man's mind is like deep water***, but ***a man of understanding will draw it out***” (Prov 20:5) (RSV).



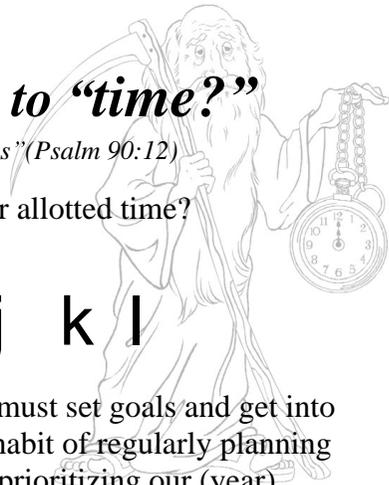
How do we relate to "time?"

"so teach us to number our days" (Psalm 90:12)

How well do you use all of your allotted time?



d f g h j k l



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Sat/Sun
March 31	April 1	2	3	4	5
					6
7	8	9	10	11	12
					13
14	15	16	17	18	19
					20
21	22	23	24	25	26
					27
28	29	30	May 1	2	3
					4

We must set goals and get into the habit of regularly planning and prioritizing our (year), (month), (week), and (day). After making our plans, we must document our progress! We all need to write down on paper our detailed plan with timeframes and specific needs from God in order to fulfill our plan, "the LORD answered me, and said, *Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables*, that he may run that readeth it" (Hab 2:2). This written plan becomes our prayer list! However, in order to discover

our purpose in God, we must start with a written plan! When we see the plan we can take it to God and expect Him to give us help wherever needed, "*In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps*" (Prov 16:9) (NIV).

Let's end this study with a question, "Can you show me your lifelong plan(s) on paper?" If you cannot, "I counsel thee" (as the *Book of Revelation* says), to use your time wisely and begin to discover your purpose in life. As Paul suggested, we need to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, *16 Redeeming the time*, because the days are evil!") (Eph 5:15-16)

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