



I Surrender My Time

Key Verse: “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (*Romans 12:1-2*).

We may think we can determine what our “reasonable service” should be. However, it is very plain that our reasonable service is submitting ourselves wholly to God as a living sacrifice. He wants us to surrender our all to Him, and that includes the use of the time He has given us.

We all have the same allotment of time (24 hours) each day to spend as we choose, for as long as we live. We can use those hours productively, waste them indiscriminately, abuse them terribly—it is up to the individual. However, when those hours and minutes are gone, we can never reclaim them.

God is the source of our time, just as He is the source of every part of our lives. He also has the highest claim on its use. As we present our bodies “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God,” we should recognize His claim, and surrender to Him that which He has so graciously bestowed upon us.

Demands on Our Time

While we all have the same amount of time, the demands on our time have changed dramatically. Technology has given us many labor saving devices, but at the same time has produced distractions and new demands on us. Television, computers, and smart phones are great, but notice how much valuable time is spent in these areas.

School activities, family activities, and even church activities fill our calendar very quickly. In addition, we have medical appointments, hair appointments, nail appointments, and other appointments that arise periodically.

If both parents work outside the home, they are hard-pressed to juggle schedules to accommodate their children in as many activities as possible. In addition, women must also carry out their role as keeper of the home.

Sometimes, elderly parents need help with doctor appoint-

ments, grocery shopping, and even assistance in the home. In many cases, one or the other elderly person (usually the woman) is caretaker for her spouse.

Everything we do requires time.

Reflective Questions:

What distractions or demands might influence your time?

What is the biggest distraction or demand that affects your time with God?

How have you responded to these distractions?

We Need Our Time WITH God

We may think we are too busy to take time out to be with God, but our busy-ness actually increases our need for Him.

Jesus was extremely busy when He was on earth. The crowds gathered around Him and physically pressed upon Him with their demands. Though He was God, He took on the form of man and suffered as a man—hunger, pain, loneliness, and weariness. Though He is the Son of God, He needed to have time with His Father while on earth.

Jesus communed with God constantly. He sometimes rose early in the morning to pray (Mark 1:35), or prayed all night

(Matthew 26:36). He prayed after His baptism (Luke 3:21), and after feeding the 5,000 (John 6:11). He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before His arrest and trial (Matthew 26:36-46), and on the cross that God would forgive those who were responsible for His death (Matthew 27:46).

If Jesus, the Son of God, needed to make special time to be with God and pray, how much more do we need time with God?

Many passages in the Bible encourage us to spend time with God. In Isaiah 1:18, God encourages us to “come, let us reason together.” In Matthew 11:28, Jesus invites us to, “Come...all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” In Jeremiah

33:3, the Lord offers, "Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not." James 4:8 reminds us to, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you." And 2 Chronicles 7:14 adds, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their

wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land."

God is our Father. He is a good Father, who wants to spend time with His children. He does not force the issue but waits with love and patience for us to respond to His invitations. How disappoin He must be that so few respond!

Reflective Questions

Why did Jesus constantly need to pray?

What kind of circumstances makes you want to seek time with God?

What elements are required to have a good relationship with a father?

How do these relate to our relationship with our heavenly Father?

What can you do to deepen your relationship with God?

We Need to Use Our Time FOR God

Not only is Jesus our role model in spending time *with* God, but also for spending time *for* God. His whole purpose in coming to this earth was to do the will of the Father. At age 12, He confounded the religious leaders with His knowledge of the Scriptures, and was surprised that Mary and

Joseph did not understand He needed to be "about the Father's business."

In John 6:38 Jesus said, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." The statement Jesus sent to John the Baptist to confirm He was Messiah did not speak of what Jesus said, but what He did: "Go your way, and

tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached" (Luke 7:22). He used His time to minister to those in need.

He did not come as a King but as a servant. He described Himself as "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29). He turned no one away, and even went out of His way to minister to outcasts, such as the woman of Samaria in John 4.

Compare this ministry to Matthew 25:35-40, where Jesus explained that those who would inherit the kingdom used their time to minister to others—the thirsty, the hungry, the homeless, the naked, the sick, the prisoner.

The bottom line is this, "Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (verse 40). We should use our time to minister to fellow Christians but should also extend it to our enemies.

When Jesus was asked, "which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matthew 22:36) He responded, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

If we love God, we should want to spend time with Him. If we love our neighbor, we should care enough to minister to him when he is in need, and not ignore him like the priest and the Levite did in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).

Reflective Questions:

What part does the use of time play in your relationship with God?

How could you use your time to minister to one considered an enemy?

Surrender Your Time to God

Time is a precious commodity, and needs to be treated wisely and with the utmost respect. According to Solomon, "a wise man's heart discerneth both time and judgment. Because to every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him" (Ecclesiastes 8:5-6). There is a proper time and procedure for everything, and it

takes a person of wisdom to understand and do the right thing.

We are accountable to God for our decisions regarding time, and will one day give an account to Him for how we used the time He gave us. The “misery” probably refers to judgment for doing the wrong thing. If we place our time in God’s hands, we will not need to worry about “misery” or judgment.

Paul encourages us to “redeem” the time (Ephesians 5:16). To *redeem* implies buying it at any price because it is so valuable. We cannot “buy” time, for we have the full allotment we receive. However, we can make better use

of the time given to us. We need to recognize that God has the highest claim on our lives and our time, and He will help us know how to use it.

God wants us to present our bodies to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him (Romans 12:1). This is our reasonable service. However, we must serve Him because we love Him. We must use our time to serve others because we love them. It is easy to serve those you love, but it becomes a burdensome chore if love is not there.

Show your love for God and others; surrender your time to Him.

Reflective Questions:

Has this lesson given you more insight about the use of time?

How can you redeem time?

About the Writer: Joan Warren is a former pastor’s wife who returned to her home church in Oilton, Oklahoma, after retirement. Joan teaches Sunday School and has women’s Bible studies in her home and at their senior citizens center.