

# How Do We Use Our Time

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Study Given by W. D. Frazee—September 17,

I want to study with you for a little while tonight what it is that makes the difference between success and failure in the Christian life. It is this, dear friends, the way we use our time. Particularly, the way we use part of our time. We all sleep six, seven, eight, nine, ten hours a night, that averages about eight hours. That is what most people think of as the average time for sleep. How much of our time does that use up? About one third.

Then most people average about eight hours a day in work. And let me say, dear friends, that is what it averages so if you don't get in eight, somebody else is working more than eight for you. Don't forget that.

So that is another third. So how much does that leave? Another third. And I think most people that are saved will be because of the way they have learned to spend that third third. And I am afraid that most people who are lost, it will be because of the way they spent that third third.

The time when we are neither sleeping nor working, now there are some things of course that everybody does during those eight hours. Just as everybody sleeps some, and everybody works some, at least most people do, so they are some things that everybody does during that third third. Can you tell me one of them? Eating. That is right. And it can be a wonderful pleasure, can't it? Yes. It can also be a cause of ulcers and cancer and high blood pressure and arthritis, and a lot of other troubles.

The way you spend your time eating. Not only what you eat, but whether you eat fast like a dog, or eat slowly like you were built for, made for, all of that enters into whether you get joy or sorrow, success, or failure in life.

And I can mention other things that go into that third, but I want to mention two things especially tonight in how we use that last eight hours. One is in being alone. Alone.

How much time have you spent all alone the last twenty-four hours? How much time have you spent all alone the last week? Think about that for a little while. The Lord didn't intend that any of us should be hermits and spend all our time alone. But He who was our example, from time to time, found it necessary to withdraw from the crowds that thronged Him and spent time alone, alone with His own thoughts, alone with His Father, alone with nature and with God. Mark 1:35.

It is Sunday morning. The Sabbath before Jesus has had a wonderful day in Capernaum. Marvelous miracles have been worked. The multitude come at even

tide. At the going down of the sun they throng into the home where Jesus is to be healed. It is late that night before the last sufferer leaves relieved. And finally silence settles down on the home of Simon.

But what happens the next morning? Our text says:

“And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed” Mark 1:35.

He found it necessary when the crowd crowded in to withdraw. Now most of us don't have to climb a mountain to get away from a crowd that is pressing into the house we live in, do we? But if we find ourselves in that situation, friends, it is worth it to spend at least a little part of that third third of our time alone. In fact, in this wonderful book *Ministry of Healing* which is an inspired textbook on how to live, I read on page 58:

“All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God” *Ministry of Healing*, page 58.

We all need it. Jesus recognized that with His disciples. You remember as recorded here in the sixth chapter of Mark on another occasion the crowds got so large that Christ saw the necessity for some time apart, not only for Himself, but His apostles.

“And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place,..” Mark 6:31.

That is a place away from the cities, away from the towns, away from the multitude.

“...and rest a while:..” Mark 6:31.

Now note why He said it.

“...for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat” Mark 6:31.

They were really on a heavy program, weren't they? They needed time to be alone, apart. We all need it. And I suppose there is hardly a person here that what wishes he might find more time for that experience. There are two practical suggestions I would like to give you in that. First, dear friends, you may be surprised when I tell you this. It may not be necessary, it may not be in God's plan for us to spend as much time as we think we would like to spend in that sort of experience.

Did you ever sit down to a delicious meal and wish that you could just keep on eating? But the time comes to leave the table and go do something about what you ate? Is that right? And you remember in one occasion when Christ led through of His closest ones up with Him to the mount for a season of communion that Peter

was enjoying it so much, he said, it is good to be here, and let's do what? Build three tabernacles and just stay right here.

Did Jesus accept that suggestion either for Himself or for Peter? No. With the morning light He said, Men it is time to go down to the plain. There are some problems down there. There is some medical missionary work to be done. There are some patients that need to be looked after. There are some people that need the Gospel preached to them. Let's be on our way.

And so in a very practical way, I tell you, friends, while it is alright to enjoy being alone with God so much that we wish we had more and more, just as it is alright to enjoy our food so much that we still have a good appetite when we get up from the table, that is alright. But it would be too bad if we would have a guilt complex over the fact that we are not able to spend hours and hours and hours and hours every day just in reading and study and prayer.

We are neither monks nor nuns. We are not in a monastery or in a convent. We are on a battlefield. But even on a battlefield soldiers must have time to sleep. Is that right? They must have time to eat. And the Christian soldier must have time to replenish His spiritual power. But He doesn't take hours and hours and hours and hours. No. Let God arrange your life. Be happy for the way He arranges it. Be assured that He is more anxious than you can ever be for you to have time with Him.

Now the second practical suggestion. We shall find our success in this matter just the same way we find our success in financial matters. That tithe that God has marked as His, how do we ever find the money to pay it? We pay it first. Obviously there is no problem in finding the first tenth. That is easy. Because if there is ten tenths there it is a simple matter to just take off the first tenth and pay it to God. Is that right? That is the way to pay tithe.

“Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness;  
and all these things shall be added unto you” Matthew 6:33.

And so it is in this matter of finding time to be alone with God. “Those that seek Me early,” says God, “shall find Me.” Proverbs 8:17. Jesus was up seeking His Father when? Before breakfast.

Turn to Isaiah 50:4. This is Jesus speaking prophetically of His experience here in the world, but oh, He wants that experience to be reproduced, demonstrated again in each one of us.

“The Lord GOD hath given me...” Isaiah 50:4.

What?

“...the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is weary*: he wakeneth...” Isaiah 50:4

When?

“...morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” Isaiah 50:4

I am so glad that every morning Jesus is in the business of going from room to room, from bed to bed, waking His children up. Is that right? Yes. And He wants that the first sound we hear shall be the music of His voice. It may take the ear of faith to hear it, but the attentive heart will recognize His word.

It may be that with the awakening thought will come some precious verse of Scripture, perhaps a snatch of some song, perhaps the reminder of something that He wants us to do. Perhaps some promise. It may be that He will remind us that He has some special blessing for us in the study of the morning watch texts, or in the Sabbath school lesson, or in some other devotional text or passage. In a thousand ways God is waiting to speak to us through His word, through nature, by His providence.

There is another aspect of this being alone that I would like to notice, friends, we are to be alone not merely to commune with God, but to commune with our own hearts. That is a science and an art that few people know much about these busy, rushing days.

May I read again that sentence from *Ministry of Healing*, page 58?

“All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God” *Ministry of Healing*, page 58.

I heard somebody say to somebody not long ago, “I haven’t seen much of you lately.” The one spoken to replied, “Well, I haven’t seen much of myself lately either.” There is more to it sometimes than just a pleasantry, my friends. It is possible to be so rushed hour after hour, day after day, that we are hardly acquainted with ourselves. And we need time to get acquainted with ourselves.

Oh somebody says, “Everybody knows himself, doesn’t he?” Oh no.

“The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” Jeremiah 17:9.

Let me tell you, friends, it is quite a science getting acquainted with yourself. Just to bring out the point, were you ever surprised in something you did? I shall not embarrass you by asking you to tell us about it. But, friends, any of us that have lived very long have probably found more than once something in our heart, our mind, our lives, that surprised us, perhaps in a very disappointing way.

Peter did, you remember. Peter did not know himself we are told. That is why Jesus suggested to him that he not only pray, but what? Watch. Watch who? Watch John? Watch James? Watch who? Watch Peter. But Peter thought it was all unnecessary. He thought he understood himself well, and that Jesus care was more than he needed. But he found out in a bitter disappointment.

Oh friends, listen to this exhortation from Inspiration.

“Guard jealously your hours for prayer, Bible study, and self-examination” *Gospel Workers*, 1915 edition, page 100.

What kind of examination? Self-examination. At the close of the day is a good time to look back over the record. And listen, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you can examine something that no other human being can examine, that is the motives of the heart. That is the important thing. Many a deed that is praised by others, when it is looked at in the light of the Spirit’s guidance, looks cheap and selfish.

Thank God also, friends, many a humble, sincere effort to serve God that because of our bungling human awkwardness elicits at best a faint smile from some other human being brings light and joy from God as we examine it in this period of self-examination. Not that we should take credit to ourselves, but we can say, “Lord, You knew that I was trying to help You and I know You understand, and I thank You.”

Do you see what I mean, friends? We need this times for self-examination. Not self-depreciation. Not taking a lash and scourging ourselves on the back. No. But in the light of God’s law looking over the record, confessing where we have failed, weeping where we have broken the Master’s heart, and then, by faith, as we studied last vesper service, claiming the righteousness of Jesus to cover all that, and going to bed, going to sleep knowing that we are covered, we are accepted just as if we had not sinned.

Isn’t it wonderful, friends? And that way we get more out of our sleep and we are ready to wake up in the morning to have another period of being alone with Jesus this time not to weep over the past, but to rejoice over the future. You know in that last letter the Lord’s messenger wrote before she went to rest, you will find it in the book *Testimonies to Ministers*, the last chapter, comes this beautiful statement.

“I rejoice in the bright prospects of the future, and so may you” *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 518.

So every day is fresh and new with blessings, bright prospects, but we need this time alone with God, alone with ourselves, with nature, and with the Bible. I trust that all of us have had some experience in this quiet time. I trust that all of us will get more out of it this coming week, this coming month. Not necessarily by spending more time in it. That can be repeated so often it becomes trite. I want to spend more time in Bible study, more time in prayer, more time with nature, more time this and that.

Friends, did you ever stop to think that the only way you can spend more time in one thing is to spend less time in something else? One of the great lessons we have learn is not so much to spend more time in some of these things as to put ourselves fully into the time that we do spend. Some of us probably do need to

spend more time, but remember, the only way we can get more time in this, is to have less time in something else.

Alright. Now another use of part of our time in this third third, this third eight hours, that is the time we spend with other people apart from our work. After we have slept, after we have worked we still have some time, and everybody here is spending some time with somebody, probably several somebodies apart from work. This is one of the greatest educational opportunities in life. This is one of the greatest soul-winning opportunities in life.

May I suggest to you this simple thing? Seek each day for the Spirit's guidance in opportunities to be with somebody that you can get something from, and somebody that you can give something to.

Now Brother Dull reminded us a few moments ago of that verse, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." But don't forget, that says it is blessed to receive. Isn't that what it says? Sure it says that. It is blessed to receive and never forget it. But it is still more blessed to what? Give.

Alright. So in that third third of your time that you have let not the moments be frittered away in just ordinary conversation. Watch for opportunities, see if God is not arranging a providence where you can get something from somebody, or give something to somebody. This can come even in hours of work. I remember several years ago right over here on fruit hill where the vineyard is now, Brother Cooper, our farm manager, and I were clearing part of that land. He was teaching me how to use the saw and the axe. And while we were busy together with that he was drawing out of me help in learning the Bible, getting better acquainted with Bible verses and their meaning.

We were really getting sixty minutes out of an hour, friends, because he was teaching me, and I was teaching him, and we were getting the wood cut for the furnace and also clearing the land where the grapes and apples grow now. I like to see every train carry a full load. What do you say? So watch for these opportunities in being with people.

Nearly everybody that you are with has something that you could learn. They either know some fact or some skill that if you would just encourage them to do it, they could teach you something. They might even be younger than you are. That is all right.

Probe around. Ask the Lord to guide you. See if you can't by questioning, or by watching. See the Lord arranging for you to learn something, to get something practical, worth while, from that person that you are with. But also remember this, nearly everybody that God's providence puts you with is somebody that you could help in some ways.

It might be somebody that knows ten times as much about the Bible as you do, but they need a word of courage, a word of cheer. Maybe you can bring joy into their heart by telling them some experience that you had yesterday, some missionary experience that God gave you, some experience in answered prayer. Friends, when

we do things like that the blessings multiply just as the bread multiplied as Jesus gave it to the disciples and the disciples took it out to the people there on the hillside. You remember?

So, I suggest to you, friends, that one of the greatest factors in success in the Christian life is what you do with that third third. Now you are not going to spend all the eight hours in eating, you are not going to spend all of that last eight hours in Bible study, in prayer, in visiting. You are not going to spend all of it alone, with yourself, and God. You are not going to spend all of it trying to help somebody else in a spiritual or social way. But, day by day as you seek God's guidance He will help you to know how to distribute those last eight hours in a way that will bring the greatest blessing to you and to others.

Last night Brother Atherton handed me the latest *U.S. News and World Report*. He called my attention to this feature article mentioned on the front page, What Cities are doing to people. And as I have glanced through this article, friends, I must say I have been impressed with this—that what some people think is a sacrifice coming into a work of this kind and into a place of this kind is really a great blessing. How do you feel about it?

What Cities are doing to People. Let me read you just a few things.

“Rush to the cities is emerging as the number one domestic problem facing American. Reason? Cities and their suburbs abound with unsolved hazards for people, smog, water pollution, over-crowding, noise, poverty, crime are taking a rising toll. Authorities list increasing lung cancer, deafness, heart trouble, mental breakdowns among the effects of city living. Yet Americans trek to cities is unabated. Soon more than three out of every four Americans will live in metropolitan areas. Public officials and health leaders are worried by the trend.”

Well, shortly before I was born a book was published called the *Ministry of Healing*. It contains the wisdom of the Great Physician. For over sixty years that book has been before the American public and in this we find that it was not God's plan that people should be huddled together in these cities, rather He desires that we shall place ourselves and our children amidst the beautiful sights and sounds of nature in the country. Life in the cities, it says, is false and artificial. This was before the days of many of the problems that are facing the world's leaders today.

Back there it was bad. Today it is worse. Tomorrow will be worse yet. Friends, shall we say to the Lord, “Lord, if You will arrange it so that I can have all the advantages and conveniences and money and everything else of the cities, and yet live in the country, I will buy that. I will take that.”?

Do you remember a man and his family that was in a great city once that was about to be destroyed and the Lord thought so much of them that he sent two angels down there to try to get them out. Do you remember? Where was it? Sodom. Did

the angels themselves have a hard time? Oh yes. They had to actually lay hold of that man and his wife and the two girls and just pull them out of that city.

What was the matter with them, friends? Had they always been that way? No. They had once known the quiet of the Oaks at Mamre. They had once enjoyed the morning and evening worship of Uncle Abraham and Aunt Sarah. But something had gotten in their eyes, a glimmer, a glimmer, a tinsel, and they had been drawn down to that city to the bright lights and the gay parties, to the chance to make money and be somebody. And when Sodom went up in smoke all they had went up with it.

Oh dear ones, "As it was in the days of Lot; ... Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:28,30. And He who sent angels to lead Lot from Sodom, in His last warning message is saying to every child of His love, "Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, ... Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Revelation 14:8; 18:4. But when we leave these cities, how much shall we leave behind? Let's leave everything behind that we can. What do you say, friends? Let's get what is out here. And one of the biggest reasons we need to leave the noise of the cities is so that in the quietness we can hear our Father speak. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I *am* God." Psalms 46:10.

Not long ago I chanced to find these lines in which someone who knows what we have just been thinking about has expressed the longing to be away from it all.

"I weary of these noisy nights of shallow jests and course  
Good cheer, of jazzy sounds and brilliant lights,  
Come Love, let us away from here.

"Let us lay down this heavy load and side by side far from  
The town drive on some lovely country road and  
Wondering watch the sun go down.

"What time is left to us, Come Love, the woods, the fields  
Shall make us whole, the nightly pageantry above,  
Our little world, keep sweet our soul.

"No peace this city's madness yields a tawdry world in cheap veneer,  
Out there the lovely woods and fields,  
Come Love, let us away from here."

Ah friends, the One who made these lovely things is waiting for us under the pine trees, beside the Lake, up the mountain side, on these trails, in the garden working with Him, under the apple tree sitting down in the shadow of His love with great delight and finding His fruit sweet to our taste.

I repeat, friends, our success or failure depends upon what we do with our third third of our time. Do you agree with me? Thank God for our glorious opportunity!

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