

“Body”

Direction, not intention, determines destination. You win or lose by the path you choose. It is not where you are that is the issue; it is where you are headed.

There is often a disconnect between where we want to end up and the path we choose.

“The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and suffer for it.”
Proverbs 27:12 (NIV)

*“Lord, help me to see trouble coming long before it gets here,
and give me the wisdom to know what to do and the courage to do it.”*

Choosing the right path begins with submission, not information. Submission to the One who knows where each path leads, as well as where it doesn't lead. Submission to the One who knows what's best for you better than you know what's best for you.

What gets our **ATTENTION** determines our direction and, ultimately, our destination.

To find the path that will take you where you want to go, you must break the cycle of self-deception.

1. Am I Being Completely Honest With Myself?

Questions to help keep your heart in check ... Why am I doing this, really? ... If someone in my circumstances came to me for advice, what course of action would I recommend?

2. What Story Do I Want To Tell?

Two questions to apply to every option that comes your way ...

- a. Does this option violate God's law? (Has God already spoken on this matter?)
- b. Does this option violate a principle (cause-and-effect relationship)? (What outcome am I expecting from this decision?)

God's will for your life will always line up with His law, His principles, and His wisdom.

3. Is There A Tension That Needs My Attention?

When you're making a decision and one of the options raises a little bit of that tension, **PAUSE** and allow it to get as big as possible before you make the decision.

4. What Would Be Most Honoring To God?

**“In light of my past experiences, my current circumstances,
and my future hopes and dreams, what is the wise thing for ME to do?”**

In light of my past experiences, my current responsibilities,
and my future hopes and dreams what is the wisest way to spend my time?

“Man's days are determined; you have decreed the number
of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.”

Job 14:5 (NIV)

You can overspend, overeat, and overachieve, but you can't “over-live.” The Psalmist adds this:

“Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

Psalms 90:12 (NIV)

PRINCIPLES REGARDING TIME ...

1. There is a cumulative value in investing small amounts of time in certain activities over a long period.

Exercise is probably the best example. Experts tell us that there is tremendous value in exercising 3-5 times per week. Here is the challenge: at the end of your first week, will you be able to tell a difference? Probably not. You are not going to drop 10 lbs. from a little exercise in one week. However, if you do this for a year, you are going to see a lot of change. You're going to feel better, healthier and be in better shape.

2. Neglect has a cumulative effect as well.

You can neglect your health for a day, but if you neglect it for years and years it has a cumulative effect physically, relationally, spiritually, emotionally and financially.

Here is why this so dangerous. You cannot go back and make up for lost time. Why? Because it is lost. It is gone. I cannot go back and re-live it. It is gradual and cumulative and we often don't realize the effect that it has on us. It takes a heart attack for us to change our eating habits. It often takes something extreme to get our attention. Long term neglect can kill you.

3. There are rarely immediate consequences for neglecting single installments of time in any particular arena of life.

This is why it's so easy for us to miss our exercise routine. Because when we get off our routine or our diet for one day it's not that big of a deal. When we look at that one moment, that one snack, that one meal, and evaluate that one installment of time we'll easily arrive at, *“This really isn't all that important.”* Nothing comes apart. There are usually no huge consequences. This is how we talk ourselves out of things all the time. *It's just once, it's no big deal.*

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4. There is no cumulative value in the urgent things we allow to interfere with what's most important to us.

If you don't exercise over the course of a year what have you done instead? Slept in, stayed up later, read the newspaper, breakfast with friends, piddled around in the house, etc. When you stack up all the stuff you did instead of exercising and you add it all up it all adds up to zero.

5. In the critical arenas of life, you cannot make up for lost time.

At school you can pull an all-nighter and make up for a lack of studying along the way. In the critical areas of life there are no all-nighters. You cannot cram for a healthy body!

The key areas of life require small deposits all along the way. In light of these truths about the way we manage time ... here is what the Lord says as it relates to the issue of time ...

“Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise,
making the most of your time, because the days are evil. So then do not be foolish,
but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NASB)

The phrase making the *most of your time* literally means redeeming the time. In the Greek it's an accounting term. Paul was saying, “*Get the full value out of your time – squeeze all the good you can out of every moment of your life.*” In other words, *get as much out of your time as you can because misappropriated time is a misappropriated life. Get maximum value from your life.*

Why does Paul tell us to make the most of our time (redeem the time)? Because the days are evil. In other words, don't miss out on your today's. You only get to spend today once.

We do not live in a morally, ethically neutral environment and because of this our values are constantly being challenge. **If we are not very careful, we will allow the current of culture to draw us into a lifestyle where our time is carelessly used rather than strategically invested.**

**Reflection: What do you need to stop doing? What do you need to do more consistently?
What do you need to start doing on a daily basis?**

“Don't procrastinate— there's no time to lose.”

Proverbs 6:4 (MSG)

“If you live wisely, you will live a long time; wisdom will add years to your life.”

Proverbs 9:11 (NCV)

“Whoever gathers in the summer is a wise son. Whoever sleeps at harvest time brings shame.”

Proverbs 10:5 (GW)

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“The fear of the Lord lengthens {the number of} days,
but the years of wicked people are shortened.”

Proverbs 10:27 (GW)

“Spend time with the wise and you will become wise, but the friends of fools will suffer.”

Proverbs 13:20 (NCV)

“If you are lazy and sleep your time away, you will starve.”

Proverbs 19:15 (CEV)

Let’s Pray!

“*Give us today our daily bread*” teaches us that we can ask God to meet our basic needs. When our lives are lined up with his values, we can ask for fuel to do it. I had to come to grips with the fact that I wasn't eating my daily bread. I was eating today's and part of tomorrow's. As a result, I gained weight gradually for years.

When I pray for the Lord to give me my daily bread, I realize that means I need to eat within the range of my daily needs. Make your consumption of food a matter of prayer. Learn about portion control. The Lord will help me. Eating is not about me, how I feel, how much I like or dislike something. It is about having energy and strength to fulfill God's purpose for my life. When our hearts are aligned with God's heart, we can ask the Lord for food to help us.

Take a moment right now and ask God to give you the food you need today to do his will for your life. How are you with food?