

demanding crowds. He knew we need to be recharged so He gave us permission to relax a minimum of one day a week.

### Time for People

Jesus took time to hold babies, talk to outcasts, attend marriages, and have fellowship lunches at Mary and Martha's home. Even when the task was serious His attitude was delightful and pleasing.<sup>7</sup>

### Conclusion

"The proverb that time is money understates the case. Time is the inexplicable raw material of everything. Without it, nothing is possible. The supply of time is

truly a daily miracle. You wake up each morning and lo! your purse is magically filled with the unmanufactured tissue of life. It is yours. No one can take it from you. It is unstealable. No one receives either more or less than you receive. Wealth or genius is never rewarded by even an extra hour

a day. And there is no punishment. Waste this precious commodity as you will, and yet the supply will never be withheld from you."<sup>8</sup> All you and I have to do is live these 24 hours daily and out of them enjoy health, happiness, and unbelievable blessings.



#### References:

- <sup>1</sup> Today in the Word (Online subscription), "Taking Care With Gods Time," February 2014, p. 26.
- <sup>2</sup> Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 342.
- <sup>3</sup> M.A. Hollister, "Time, an Irreplaceable Commodity," *The Ministry Magazine*, 1939, p. 18.
- <sup>4</sup> Fred Smith, "Emergency Aid for the Swamped," *Leadership Journal*, Summer 1985, p. 58.
- <sup>5</sup> Gordon MacDonald, "Cut & Sharpen," *Leadership Journal*, Fall 2011, p. 83.
- <sup>6</sup> Ellen White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 342-344.
- <sup>7</sup> Julie-Allyson Ieron, "There's Never Enough Time," *Moody Magazine*, May/June 1999, pp. 55, 56.
- <sup>8</sup> Unknown Source

**"Defer no time, delays have dangerous ends."**

—William Shakespeare

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# The Stewpot

A potpourri of practical ideas to help you become a better steward.

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## THE GIFT OF TIME

By Gordon Botting, DrPH, CHES, CFC

Four years ago, followers and fans were surprised to see tennis star Rafael Nadal wearing a wristwatch during professional matches. The reason was that he had partnered with Richard Mille, a Swiss luxury watch company. The timepiece he was wearing was not only beautiful and durable but also extremely expensive—worth about \$525,000!<sup>1</sup> Every watch, every timepiece has a price, but calculating the worth of actual time is impossible!

The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), which NIV colorfully entitled, "The Parable of the Bags of Gold," has four main characters—the owner and his three employees. Each employee was to invest a portion of the owner's immeasurable assets. A talent was equivalent to 20 years of a man's salary. Hence, the five talents given to the first employee were equal to 100 years of wages, two talents to forty years of income, and one talent to two decades of remuneration—still a sizeable amount. At the end of the story the first two employees doubled the talents they received, which pleased the owner to no end. Afraid to invest, the third just placed it in terra firma—and was immediately fired.



### Wise Use of Time

Several stewardship principles can be drawn from this parable, not just on financial prudence but on the stewardship of time.

Like gold, time is a God-given resource which is not for us to do as we please, but to use wisely. "Our time belongs to God. Every moment is His, and we are under the most solemn obligation to improve it to His glory. Of no talent He has given will He

Stewardship is a total lifestyle. It involves our health, *time*, talents, environment, relationships, spirituality, and finances.

*"Do you love life? Then do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of."* —Benjamin Franklin

require a more strict account than of time."<sup>2</sup> Another person puts it this way: "How many pearls of time are lost, how many jewels

ungathered, how many brain cells unused, what eternal consequences involved, particularly when we think how many minutes there are in one year—525,600."<sup>3</sup> Interestingly, time is wasted more in minutes and not in hours. It is estimated that in a ten-year period, the average person diddles away enough minutes to earn a college degree. One author said that when he is strapped for time he swallows his curiosity and makes statements rather than asking questions. He says, "Ask how is your mother-in-law and your time will be taken up on a long and maybe depressing story. It's just as warm to say, 'I'm glad to see you' and keep smiling."

Curiosity costs a lot of time. The other time-saver is concluding a committee meeting by saying, "The most important person in this meeting leaves first." This remark empties a boardroom faster than any other comment

and certainly saves a lot of time wasted in rehashing the opposing points of view or just socializing.<sup>4</sup>

### Investing Time



The second principle from this parable is that God expects us to invest our time wisely. Gordon MacDonald describes a time when he and his

wife were hiking in the beautiful Swiss Alps and noticed two farmers cutting the high-standing mountain grasses with scythes. As they drew closer they noticed that periodically the farmers produced from their pockets something resembling a flat stone which they rubbed back and forth across the scythes' blades to restore sharpness. Over and over again they repeated this process—cut and sharpen, cut and sharpen. Why did these two farmers spend approximately twenty minutes of unproductive time sharpening their blades every hour? Why didn't they keep going to get the job done quicker? The answer is easy, with each swing the blades become duller and the work of mowing grass becomes harder.<sup>5</sup> Likewise,

in our lives we need to stop and sharpen our physical, social, mental, and spiritual attitudes.

Ellen White admonished us to redeem the time. "Upon the right improvement of our time depends our success. . . . A few moments here and a few moments there that might be frittered away in aimless talk; the morning hours so often wasted in bed; the time spent in traveling or waiting at the station; the moments of waiting for meals, waiting for those who are tardy in keeping an appointment—if a book were kept at hand and these fragments of time were improved in study, reading, or careful thought, what might be accomplished!"<sup>6</sup>

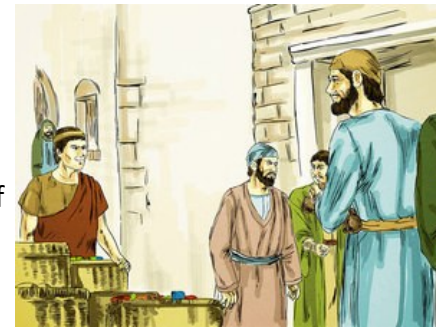
I've read a story of a guardsman on a train that went from station A to station B with a ten-minute stop at station B. The guardsman noticed a small piece of land at the end of the station, full of weeds and wild flowers. He determined that he would spend those ten minutes in preparing and planting a beautiful spring garden. In a few

weeks, by investing ten minutes each journey, his spring garden had become a delight to the traveling public. Our Heavenly Father expects us to invest our time wisely, looking for meaningful returns for His kingdom. Begin today to boldly invest in things that have eternal consequences.

### Ordering Time

#### Time for God

Jesus constantly depended on His Father by spending time in prayer on a daily basis. He also knew the Scriptures accurately as He was able to defeat the Devil with them in the wilderness.



#### Time for Interruptions

Schedule time wisely but also expect life to barge in and topple your best-laid plans.

Consider interruption as a divine appointment for a helpless and vulnerable soul.

#### Time for Rest and Relaxation

If our Savior is our example then note in the Gospels that He called His disciples away from the