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 **ime Management**

I am the first to say, if I don't like doing something I would prefer to procrastinate... or not do it at all.

However, I learnt at a young age that if I didn't manage my time or the way I organised things then they would start to dominate or overwhelm me.

So *Time Management* is something I have had to intentionally develop in my own life, and I find it is an important key to focus on with leaders and emerging leaders. It literally saved my business career. About 30 years ago, I was slogging 70 to 80 hours a week, always on the phone, working on my weekends, constantly having to deal with meetings, events, managing staff issues, clients, finances — always tackling an extensive list of responsibilities.

Add to this, those unplanned events such as: interruptions, problems, unscheduled meetings and just day-to-day disruptions that cause things to go longer than expected. I'm sure you know what I'm talking about... This certainly wasn't good for my health because of the stress it created. Looking back now I can see how inefficient my time really was.

My biggest excuse was that I was too busy to implement new processes or glean fresh information. However, eventually I

determined to learn about time management and applying it to my life. What I found, the hard way, was that it is impossible to ‘manage time.’

The main thing to realize about time management is that it is not how you control time — because you can’t alter your 24 hours each day... You might want more time, but you can’t actually create it. It’s more about how you self-manage the use of your time... How are you going to use discipline, dedication, perseverance, processes, and proficiencies to manage what you do with the time allocated, more efficiently.

Time counts. If you can use it wisely, it will benefit you. So our objective in this is you to do things more quickly and efficiently — with less stress.

DON’T count time...

Make time COUNT.

Manage yourself, not your time

Proverbs 13:4

The soul of a lazy man desires and has nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

The reality is, it’s 24 hours a day or 24 hours a day. And there’s no changing that! What I ascertained was that I had to learn how to manage the tasks I did *within* the time span allocated.

I had to get smarter.

What resulted was an increase in my time efficiency. From then on, I began working with a company called ‘Time Design,’ in the US, in the mid 80’s. We developed time diary systems with a zip-up folder of ‘To Do’ Lists and Projects section etc. (this was before the digital era of iPhones and iPads etc.). I found this was so very effective that I started to teach for them. The areas of Time Management revolutionized my life.

In this chapter I want us to look at your talks and the best way

to manage them — not only in your own life; but with those you are leading.

Stewardship

Colossians 4:5

*Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the **best use of the time.***

As Christians, I believe we are called to steward our time well. God has given us this time here on earth and I believe it is sacred and how we use it matters to Him. The Bible is full of clues and principles on how to be more diligent, organized and efficient.

As a leader Time Management helps you to

- 1) Become more efficient.
- 2) Have less stress.
- 3) Use time more wisely.
- 4) Influence those around you to become more efficient.
- 5) Empower others through delegation

What's not to like? More work done in less time — with less stress added?

Proverbs 12:24

The hand of the diligent will rule, but the lazy man will be put to forced labor.

Often I hear people say they are too busy to learn time management, but to me, it's a non-negotiable for success... especially as a leader. Time management should be learned and applied. If you are saying you don't have time...then you are the one that needs it MOST.

We need to move beyond bad habits or crisis management... beyond reaction to intention.

Making Time Management a Habit

Let me just point out by stating something seemingly obvious. Principles are very powerful, but only when put in to practice. Although some of these methods and principles I am going to teach are very simple, you still have to apply them to see any personal results. You may need to shake off ineffective behavior, learn new habits or develop fresh processes.

Please be proactive and accountable in laying the foundational information into your life, and grow from here. From the platform of information I introduce in this chapter, you can research more ways to become increasingly efficient with your time. It needs to become a habitual and a continuous learning focus for Christian Leaders.

Interestingly, when I became a Christian I began to read in the Bible about people's transformations. I always took note of the time it usually took to learn and solidify a new behavior or habit. Or for a major change in someone. It seemed to always take 40 days for people to transform from ineffective to more effectual behavior.

Now when I was a leader in the New Age I use to teach that it takes 21 days to change a habit. But what if that is man's wisdom or philosophy on the subject. What if God's way is different or maybe better?

God's way is 40 days.

- Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days:- **BUT** He came out with 'POWER'
- The Israelites were in the wilderness for 40 years: **BUT** they came out and CONQUERED their enemy and took dominion of the PROMISED LAND
- It rained for 40 nights and 40 days:- **BUT** God cleansed the earth of all unrighteousness and gave us a covenant in the form of a rainbow

So, without creating a new doctrine around this, I would like to suggest that because we're a tri-being (a spirit, with a soul in a body), a habit, when only changed for 21 days, will only change it in your soul and body. But to have an everlasting transformation in your 'spirit' also then it needs 40 days.

I believe that if you practice these principles for 40 days, then your whole being, body, soul AND spirit would develop and integrate the habit to where your spirit will also keep defaulting to your new good habit, and it becomes more automatic, natural and bears fruit.

Short Term Pain for Long Term Gain

In my profession I would normally spend two full days teaching on the areas of Time Management and to increase your effectiveness. It is one of my favorite topics to teach. So my aim is to give you in this chapter as many 'quick' tips and principles I can that will be of great use for you as Christian Leaders.

TIME WASTERS

Let's look at the areas of your working day that could be some of the most common time wasters in the work place. Then I will look at some solutions that if 'practiced' can give you more 'time' for other things.

Interruptions

PHONES: For example, what if your phone rings constantly at random times throughout your day, demanding your time and attention... interrupting your flow and efficiency?

Can you have your phone directed to someone else to take messages? Or perhaps you could not answer it for a period of time while you're focused on a project or person?

Nowadays, with the invention of cell / mobile phones, it can

feel as though you are being interrupted all day long. And we can feel as though we need to answer it or respond immediately.

I don't agree with this.

I think you have the choice to take control. I have sometimes been in business meetings or an in-depth conversation with someone, and another person's cell phone has rung. At that time, they take the call and leave the room. I personally don't think this is very time efficient for either them or myself or the others involved in our meeting.

I understand if you are expecting an important call, yet the way to be more organized is to let the people in the meeting know in advance, especially if the call is relevant to your current conversation; but for the majority of times, we can turn our phones off, be efficient in that meeting, and then deal with other calls afterward.

This is an etiquette and principle I have seen compromised lately, because people are constantly interrupting others, and allowing themselves to be interrupted. I've even been in meetings where someone has taken a call and started handling the conversation right in front of me.

Have we 'lost control' of our power of choice from a phone?

PEOPLE: What about when people actually visit and drop by unannounced — affecting your time and projects? “Do you have a minute?” “Can I just interrupt for a moment?”

We need to have a value on what has been put before us, and communicate honorably what our values and priorities are at that time. Publicize clearly within your organization and circle of colleagues what your expectations are, and be polite in following through with how you spend your time. You can use a signal like having your door shut, or phone on hold, that

communicates to others you are unavailable for that particular time. Maybe even letting people know that for the next 1-2 hours you will be working on an important project and would like not to be disturb.

A lot of people are afraid to do this for fear of offending or upsetting people. However, you are going to need your full focus in order to be efficient. And if you keep getting interrupted, you will also be spending time in refocusing and trying to lock back into your creative or efficient zone.

Another solution is to allot certain times for projects and follow through. If you are communicating with honor and care, people will respect you for your boundaries, and strategic time allocation.

Another thing that can steal from your time is when people want to see you, and you are just responding to needs at random, without any real diary system or procedure. This leads to all kinds of complications, where you have to communicate, follow up and then feedback. It's very important for us to learn how to deal with people effectively and caringly, but without allowing it to waste our time, and interrupt our purpose.

You can coach, delegate and educate others not to interrupt you at certain times. You can also create a margin of time that you have up your sleeve to deal kindly and effectively with random intrusions. Have a person email you to set up a specified time when you can focus on them properly. Have them message you any questions ahead of time, so you are prepared with answers when you meet.

Meet with your staff individually on regular basis (eg. once a week/fortnight/month), where there is room specified for certain types of questions, dialogue, trouble shooting and planning. Empower your employees or volunteers by asking them to come up with a few options, solutions or creative ideas that you can discuss when you meet. Be careful not to belittle

their suggestions (even the most ridiculous), but help analyze or enhance what they brought to the table. Within this, be sure to celebrate and recognize their efforts and positive contribution.

They should then feel motivated to take more initiative in the future. Absolutely give feedback on where they can improve, but always lean in to the positive. If they are rewarded for being proactive, then they will likely continue to show initiative. If they are constantly criticized, or feel blocked or devalued, then this will cause most people to draw back.

MEETINGS: As far as time goes with meetings, so much time can be wasted. I have witnessed 90% of the meetings I have been involved in to be wasteful and poorly ‘chaired’ or run. I believe that so much time can be saved and use more wisely when meetings are run efficiently.

If you set a start and finish time, then you really ought to adhere to that. This becomes an opportunity to demonstrate your value for both your and other’s time, and others should begin to follow suit. If you show a blatant disregard for time, others will also hold less value for your time, or the time on your company’s watch.

Remember, you are in control.

I desire to be efficient with my own time as well as others, so if I set a meeting from 1 till 2, then I need to start on time at 1, and then finish at 2, out of respect that others have schedules to keep also. It’s a domino effect that I establish as their leader. If we haven’t covered all of the agenda then I will reschedule another time.

So what do you do if a meeting seems to be going longer? Well, it’s simple. As the leader, you are in charge. You can communicate throughout the meeting, “This looks like it’s going to take longer, so we’ll finish at 2, but we’ll adjourn some time in the near future so you can cover those things.

Or, if during the meeting, someone is talking off topic, then you need to regroup, get back on to the subject and say, “We can discuss that offline, or out of the meeting at a different time. Let’s stay on point with this time we have allotted. I know that this doesn’t always go to plan, but as a leader, if you start moving into that principle of running meetings on time, everyone will be more efficient and the meeting will be more effective. You are also demonstrating that your word is dependable. That you are integrous to deliver what it is you said you will. Let your Yes be Yes and your No be No.

I also like to send a draft agenda out to the participants so they can also have time prior to become efficient with what communication they bring to the meeting.

I have discovered that as a leader there is great responsibility. If I start late and finish late time and time again I will teach and educate my people that way. Inefficient.

If I start on time, stay on course and finish on time I train and educate my people to be effective. Either way...I create it !

If you are not leading the meeting but have an appointment after 2, just explain briefly and clearly to the chairperson before you start that you will need to leave at 2 in order to be ready for your following appointment or commitments.

Not Delegating

Another huge time waster is continuing with tasks that could be delegated. Leaders delegate. So if you don’t why don’t you?

Often we are afraid that someone won’t put the effort or skill into the task that we would; however, sometimes, in order to be more time efficient, we just need to delegate. We must become Leaders who learn how to empower and equip those around us to be able to learn and become efficient at tasks we delegate. If you are someone who does not delegate because of the above then learning the techniques of how to coach and empower is a must for you.

As a quick exercise, write down some tasks that you could delegate. This might be in your home or workplace. Then write down *who* you can delegate these to.

It might initially take a little more of your time, as you coach another person how to complete the task more successfully, but this is true empowerment. This way you can give them feedback as they go, and then release them to take on more responsibility in their role. Train and educate people to do the things you require of them. This can take some stepping in and coaching, putting guiding parameters around them; but eventually you should be able to trust them to perform these tasks more independently, and in the long run, you will save time.

Give reasons to people as to why they are learning new skills, so they become more motivated to increase their capacity and benefit the company. (Remember, ‘purpose’ is the reason why we do something).

The best way of creating time efficiency is to empower those you are leading to step up to the plate and contribute.

Even if they get something wrong, don’t focus on the mistake. Instead, celebrate them taking the initiative. The more you do that, the more likely they are to be creative and effective problem solvers. Eventually, when they are doing this for you, it will release you to move into other areas that you need to be focused on.

Your aim should be to lead the bigger picture, not micromanage every small aspect. Coaching, empowering and communicating are all very important in developing a team who can help carry the weight and release you to grow things at the helm.

Procrastination

This is a HUGE time waster. Most people procrastinate because

they don't have a strong enough desire to complete the task in front of them.

Exodus 18:13-22 - Recall how Moses' father-in-law Jethro wisely taught him to delegate some of his heavy work load.

For example, I used to procrastinate with anything to do with admin. It wasn't getting done, but it also would affect my attention span with other things I *was* tackling, because my mind would be distracted from concentrating on what I should actually be achieving. My head was constantly reminding me what I needed to do next or what I hadn't completed.

My emotions would also be effected — continuously feeling lousy because I wasn't doing what I should be. The energy level of my thinking power throughout the day was diluted, and less effective.

Then when I finally actually got around to my admin work, I found I was cramming things, not doing them properly, and getting them in beyond the due date. Not fun. Not efficient.

The best way to handle this is to just do what needs to be done. It's that simple. Create a time for it, and set about to completing it. You will then have a sense of satisfaction with your efforts. The best time to do the thing you want to procrastinate on is 'Now'

The quicker you complete something that you usually procrastinate on the better. Then it is done and it wont keep 'niggling' at your mind robbing you of concentration etc.

I call it the **WITJDI** principle: **Whatever It Takes Just Do It !**

Another Tip: My 'Procrastination' tray is now labeled, "Do It Now!"

Indecision

If indecision comes, where you're unsure about how to get something done, then you need to be determined to find the answers as quickly as possible: research and seek wise counsel to make that decision. The longer you wait, the greater a time waster it becomes for you. Approach it now, get others involved, delegate... take action.

When things keep coming up in your mind that you have yet to do, but are distracting you... simply write them down for later that day, or week, or month. It helps to keep space in your mind for what is actually at hand and more urgently requires your focus.

If I am still stuck in what decision to make I seek wise counsel.

Proverbs1:5

A wise man will hear and increase learning, AND a man of understanding will attain wise counsel.

My pride seldom gets in the way anymore. I believe in the protection of wise counsel. Find people that have walked the path you have. The people that have used God's principles successfully. People who have faced troubles, problems and maybe even failed. But have then used God's ways and achieved victory.

Acting with Incomplete Information

In this technological era, researching via Google and the internet brings so much information right across our laptops and phones, no matter where we are in the world. What an incredible resource to have just at our fingertips. Don't act on something that is incomplete. Put your information together and then step out. A little research can save much error and heartache.

People who are close to me know that I research EVERYTHING.

I never pretend to know all things or that I understand all aspects of something. My researching has saved me many, many, many times

Crisis Management (putting out fires)

It's not your job to do everything. You need to be able to equip your staff to assist you to douse out any fires. When you are doing this yourself, have those you are training to come along with you, so they can observe and learn alongside you. Then delegate tasks, smaller to greater, gradually increasing in responsibility. You should put some measurements in place. How far can they go to solve a problem for example. Some employees or volunteers won't take initiative in areas because they are unsure as to what they are allowed to do, and how far they are allowed to go.

Your responsibility as a leader is to set and communicate clearly boundaries that define what is expected of them, how far they can go as they learn, as well as what they are not permitted to do. This saves them coming to you regularly to keep checking in with what they should or shouldn't be doing. And can also lower the risk of someone stepping out of bounds and creating complications

Unclear Communication

Make sure you do two things when you are communicating with people:

Confirm and Clarify

This goes both ways. Confirm and clarify what they are saying to you, as well as what you are conveying to them. So much time is wasted and inefficiencies are created because of unclear communication. The tasks at hand might not be completed in the way you initially required, and then trouble shooting these misunderstandings will consume even more time.

You have to be accountable as a leader: to what you have said and how you have explained it. Different people have different ways of interpreting information, so be certain they have received and perceived your communication in the way you intended. Give people a reason to understand what they are doing, and why. This can help solidify what it is you are desiring to get done.

Inadequate Technical Knowledge

Technology has advanced in so many ways, but is particularly helpful in offering tools for us to be more effective with our time usage. Smart phones, ipads, tablets, androids, computer programs, software, aps. There are many options to help with planning, scheduling. I'm able to do many things much faster now because I can bypass certain menial tasks through using my technology.

For example, I don't need to retype something. I can simply transfer what I've already logged in to another platform. It pays to learn how to use some of these tools. You are never too old. Technology these days is very simple and user friendly. You can take some classes, or there are many kinds of tutorials available online. Find out from those you work with, other business owners or pastors, what they use and why. By asking questions, I learned the right technology and how to use it to my best advantage. In fact every app on my ipad and iphone came about from me asking others what they use for efficiency.

Technology Distractions

Also, while technology can save us myriads of time and efficiency, it can also steal your valuable time through distraction. For example, you might get caught up playing mindless game aps, or scrolling through social media networks, or feel like you need to digest every new e-blast that comes across your email. Make sure you differentiate what time is given to work and what is allocated to entertainment.

Firstly: Identify your biggest sources of online distractions. Some of the most common online distractions include, but are not limited to:

- social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram
- forums
- email
- instant messenger
- news sites
- online games such as FarmVille, CityVille, etc.
- interactive sites, such as wikis and your blog.

Secondly: Disable notifications for your distractions. Sometimes what keeps you coming back to a distracting website is a notification (such as a noise, signal, pop-up, etc.) that interrupts whatever you're concentrating on.

Thirdly: Set up specific time slots for doing your emails. If you keep looking and handling every email EVERY time it comes in you are setting yourself up for time distractions and interruptions throughout all your work.

Unclear Objectives and Priorities

If you don't give people clear objectives as to what you really want and need, or why someone is doing something, then it can waste time. If someone goes down the wrong track, then they have to start again, or tweak something, which can become a huge time waster.

One the biggest time wasters I have witnessed has been from a lack of clarity of both responsibilities and accountabilities. This then leads to 'unmet' expectations on both sides. When

you have unmet expectations demotivation sets in and this then affects time efficiency greatly. Having to fix or ‘massage’ a task after it was completed is a big waste of time for both of you. Take the time to set clear objectives and the priorities of then task. The extra time spent in the beginning will ‘pay off’ in the long run.

Lack of Planning

Psalm 90:12

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

Most people I work with have started something or partnered with someone because they have felt a certain direction from God, yet they have lacked waiting on a plan from Him. They got the beginnings of the blueprint, but jumped ahead before putting foundational strategies in to place. Unfortunately, even though they rushed in to their start up with enthusiasm and boldness, they lacked wisdom, structure and timing. And it ended up costing them time, and sometimes money, people, reputation and momentum.

Whenever God gives us a vision, task or goal, if we wait, He will always give us the ‘way’ to carry it out.

The Bible is actually full or organizing and planning. Count this, then do that, then measure this, then build that. (For example, Noah and the ark... There were certain factors Noah was unaware of, however, he had to wait to then get very specific instructions to follow.) God told him He would flood the earth and then even told why he was doing it. BUT what if Noah then rushed out and started doing it his way or mans way. It would have been a very funny if not disastrous Ark.

I believe we need to do this as well. We need to know what our direction is, as well as some strategies — a plan. God doesn’t usually respond with, “Hi Alan. I want you do start this business

and then not supply 'how' to do it. He will always supply the ways, strategies if we wait for Him.

If you have a plan from God, you can at least keep checking in on where you are heading and if you are staying on track.

Time Planning

Let me give you some examples. I plan my day, as well as my week and my month. Excuse the pun but I take 'time;' to plan my time.

Monthly:

I will spend an hour, looking in to all my appointments, tasks and 'To Do' lists. Then I start to plan them into the month. And by that, I don't mean just putting them everywhere... I mean making sure they fit in a way that is efficient use of my time.

For example, I travel a lot... so this month I wouldn't plan all 3 of my trips to fall within the same week. Instead, I'm going to spread them out, so I can still do office time, staff time, invest some hours in to a new business I'm building, approach new prospective clients... I am spreading my tasks out during the week, so I can handle each one efficiently.

The other thing I do, is leave a space of time in-between my meetings. Not just to travel; but to rest, regroup and put some headspace and forward thinking into my next meeting. This way, my mind is not clouded or cluttered. I become more efficient.

I also set aside special time to spend with the Lord. Regardless of whether you lead a church, a family or a business, you need time with God. For your own sake, as well as for the benefit of those you lead, it's so important to prioritize time in the Presence of the Lord. This is where you will find peace, boldness and many of the answers and strategies for your company, job and family. I even goes as far as planning for time to connect with

God just before I go into a meeting. Then I am more discerning and efficient in that appointment.

Weekly:

At the beginning, I spend about 15 minutes, just looking over the next 7 days, what I had planned before plus if there are any additions or adjustments that need to be made. This saves hours, if not days of time... Simply by planning.

Also, if I'm going to have some time off with my wife, or my family, or if I'm going to have lunch away from the office, I include that as a planned engagement. If I don't, I just end up filling this space with other tasks and my busyness overtakes every corner of my life. I make sure that my time off, rest and Sabbath, my time with God, my family and my wife, are as important as time with a client. I schedule them in as a 'priority' appointment.

I would you prioritize a million dollar contract meeting with highest degree of importance. In fact I probably wouldn't change it or double book it. Because it is important to me.

So time with my wife or family? Or time with God? If I make it as important as doing business, then I'm going to keep the time allotted, and not reprioritize what is so precious. This is a principle I continually practice and has now become a positive habit, where I actually make time with personal relationships and time to rest, pray and refresh. It is so valuable that I make it as an appointment, and it doesn't become lost in the fray of an often very demanding business world.

I also need to mention technology here. If someone were to ask me to book something in, I can pull my calendar up straight away on my smart phone calendar, and I'm able to find a space to immediately lock it in. I don't accidentally bump out another appointment or double book. Because my smart phone is synced to my ipad and work computer, it all instantly aligns, and my

appointments don't become forgotten.

I don't double-up with my meetings. And I don't spend extra time checking my calendar in another location, and then getting back to the person with some time options. It saves much to-ing and fro-ing.

People need to see that we have a sensitivity and excellence in honoring our time.

Stress & Fatigue

If you have stress and fatigue, you will probably not be able to operate to full capacity, amassing a major time waster. When you are tired and can't think as clearly or make quality decisions, it slows your productivity and increases risk of error. The obvious alternative is to invest the time into your life to remain fit, and include rest in your schedule.

Taking time out will save you time in the long run. For example, if my head is feeling foggy, I just get up and go for a walk. It might be the last thing I feel like doing at the time, but it can reset my focus and recharge my motivation. Then I'm much more efficient.

Sometimes I will go have lunch with Jesus. That's right. I go have lunch on my own away from the office and just have a break. No planning or thinking about work. I just relax. Stress is an indicator that we are off track and out of God's presence. If I am stressed I learn to cast it onto him, ask for peace and sometimes I have to just go to a place where I can pout on worship music and rest in that space for while. In fact now that I spend time with God every morning less stress occurs in the work day ahead.

1 Peter 5:7

Casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.

An Inability to Say “No”

I used to find it quite difficult to say ‘No,’ when people or situations came up to interrupt the flow of what I was concentrating on. I’m not suggesting that you need to be rude. Quite the contrary, you should honor others. They may have a question for you. But start to say things like, “I don’t have time right now. I’m doing this... But please come back in an hour, so I can help you solve this.” If you don’t exercise these kind of restrictions to *your accessibility*, you won’t get your work done, meet your deadlines, or end up compromising in another area. People will respect you when you honor them and honor your time as well.

I remember when I was 19 and worked in a large architectural sign company as an internal sales clerk with another young man. The other reps would be out on the road while we were answering questions and taking orders. I asked the other guy how long he had been there. And he answered two years. Then I asked how long before he intended on being promoted, and he replied, “Another 5 years.”

I had been there 6 months already and although it was a good job and company, the work load was intense. I just wanted to move on. The job was too stressful, and I felt overworked. So I decided to take a week off to look for another job rather than have a holiday. The President of the Company was a very successful and smart man.

He realized what was taking place and started to teach me the importance of saying “No”... of deferring some things to another specific time, so they didn’t clutter up a more urgent task. He said, “When you do this, you show others that you are valuing your time, and you also educate people.”

When I applied this principle, the quality of my work increased and the result was that my work load was less and I did not feel overworked. I started to enjoy working there. Then they

promoted me 3 months later. The boss was able to evaluate that there was a work overload, and hired another two people. I was then required to oversee them. If you learn how to delegate, and say no in the right way, you can then achieve a greater quality of work. But ease into it. Be careful you are not too abrupt or rude.

Desk Management & Personal Organization

There might be times you have a messy desk. Sometimes mine is, but I've learned that by the end of the day, I want everything filed away and back in its rightful place. When I come back the next day or week, I want to begin afresh, with an organized working environment. If I return to a desk that is cluttered, I find myself shuffling things around and procrastinating. I am uninspired and not proficient.

As best as you can, start setting up systems. For example, in this day and age, there are so many things that just no longer require to be on paper. Do your project management on your computer. Just keep your *current* files close at hand. Put other files away in a filing cabinet or shelf. Organise your in-trays. Leave an area that is always clear on your desk for writing and looking at notes etc. And allocate a time each day for a quick tidy-up, so mess doesn't get too overwhelming and become a massive effort to clear.

Proverbs 18:9

He is slothful in his work; Is a brother to him who a great destroyer.

Prioritizing

We are usually required to accomplish a number of tasks at the same time. That means the skill of setting priorities, especially when tasks appear to be of equal importance, becomes crucial to effectiveness.

Many people struggle with knowing how to best prioritize their tasks. I learned a couple of ‘simple’ methods many years ago, that I’d like to share with you here.

First Example:

Let’s say you have 30 things on your ‘To Do’ list. You could categorize each item as this will help you to decide which one to carry out more efficiently with the time you have.

Here is the scale to categorize next to each task on the list:-

1. *Highly Important* - I need to do this straight away.
2. *Important* - This needs to get done, but it’s not urgent.
3. *Not Important* - Can be completed at any time.

Then monitor your tasks each day and week. Are you getting the tasks completed.

Secondly:

Pick 3 tasks from your list. Preferably all from the ‘Highly Important’ category.

For example, they might be: a proposal, a strategy meeting or a briefing with a staff member. I used to get confused with knowing which one was the most important to focus on. So I learned to assess the *importance* factor **and** *urgency* factor at the same time for the tasks at hand (especially if they all seemed important).

Following are examples of graphs you can use.

Time Management

TASK	IMPORTANCE	URGENCY	PRIORITY
Proposal			
Strategy Meeting			
Staff Meeting			

I then rate them with the following scale:-

- 4 VERY HIGH
- 3 HIGH
- 2 MEDIUM
- 1 LOW

My Proposal is:-

A 4 in Importance, as it is for a special client

A 1 in Urgency, as it doesn't need to be done for another few months, so I can slot it for in the future.

My Strategy Meeting is:-

A 3 in Importance, as answers need to be found

A 3 in Urgency as we need to communicate it soon

My Staff Meeting is:-

A 2 in Importance as there is no real issues looming

A 4 in Urgency as their review is due now

Kingdom Leadership

TASK	IMPORTANCE	URGENCY	PRIORITY
Proposal	4	1	
Strategy Meeting	3	3	
Staff Meeting	2	4	

Then I multiply the numbers for each task ($4 \times 1 = 4$, $3 \times 3 = 9$, $2 \times 4 = 8$).

TASK	IMPORTANCE	URGENCY	PRIORITY
Proposal	4	1	4
Strategy Meeting	3	3	9
Staff Meeting	2	4	8

Clearly we see here that the Strategy meeting has come out with the highest number and should be attended to first. It gains first priority, and will become slotted in as soon as possible. The

Staff Meeting also rates high so that will also be scheduled into my diary for a soon date. The Proposal will still get scheduled in my diary but just at a later date.

This method has saved me many hours and days over the years, as well as releasing me from some very difficult or complicated decisions as to what I should prioritize, and at what time. It's a powerful method that can help you if you struggle at all with prioritizing.

JUST A COUPLE OF TIPS TO FINISH OFF

Use your Calendar Wherever Possible.

Besides using a calendar as a diary for scheduling events, meetings, appointments, time off etc. I also use it to take notes if I'm out and about and need to remember things. Even if I'm on a walk and think of something, I quickly jot it down. I have different files, notes and categories where I can put things. If I see a particular article or image or news piece on something relevant, then I file it into that folder straight away. That way, I'm already equipped when it comes to doing the research or meeting, and it saves me a lot of time over all. Plus when I schedule in a specific meeting I can post those notes to that meeting for future reference.

Follow Up

It's very important in our new world of communication through technology of quick email and texts. Never assume that just because you've 'sent' a communication that it was received or even understood. I have found that sometimes a well timed phone call or meeting with client or staff member has stopped a very timely and ineffective situation from happening.

I was a witness in a company where 2 staff members communicated back and forth on a specific matter with over 20 emails to each other. Back and forth they would go.

Communicating and then Responding to each other, This process took hours. The amazing thing about this is that they were opposite each other on the same work station. IF they had hoped up and talked to each other face to face it would have taken a tenth of the time.

When someone communicates something verbally, follow it up in writing while you can still remember. This is crucial, again too many of us have assumed we heard something or assumed we communicated something only to find out later that that was incorrect. When we follow up verbally we create high effectiveness and stop any time wasters in the future.

If someone shares something they have achieved, be sure to celebrate with them and follow up with writing. Even if you already told them verbally, now tell them in writing.

If someone texts you, sends a little note on viber or emails you; always respond. People need to feel secure that there is consistent and authentic conversation taking place. When you keep communication lines clear and flowing, then there's less crisis management or repetition. Follow up your reasons, strategies, and objectives.

FINALLY

Let me leave you with this Time Challenge.

Very basically Time = Money.

Just say a bank was to give you \$1000, but at the end of the day, if you hadn't used it all wisely, they were going to take back what was left. If this were true, would you find new effective ways to utilize the money? Of course!

Consider this was the same with time. Practice the ways to manage your time so it's not wasted and lost. Put the things discussed here in this chapter into your life as a Christian. You

will be rewarded. When God says that if we are faithful with the 'little' he will reward us with more' I believe this is not limited to money only.

In order to change, transform and make a difference in your life and your journey as a Christian leader, eliminate time wasters in your life, and discover ways you can administer greater time efficiencies. Practice these. Develop positive habits.

As Christian Leaders:-

You and I have to learn to be okay with not being the best at everything, and not being able to do everything that is expected of us. I pray you will be selective. I encourage you to confidently choose your priorities according to your *purpose* as we discussed in the last chapter.

You are called to greatness and efficient stewardship of your time.