

Stewarding Our Time

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[0 : 00] Ephesians chapter 5. I'll just warn you on the front end, this is the longest word count I've ever had in writing a sermon.

! And when I tried to make cuts, I just realized I only say important things. So, we're going to have to move quickly, and bear with me. But today I have the privilege, the joy, and the challenge of preaching on the topic of stewarding your time.

Everyone in our world is interested in this topic for varied reasons. You can imagine the businessman, he wants to manage time better, to be more profitable, to make more money, to have more product.

You can imagine the family man, he wants to get out of work as soon as possible and spend time with his family. Everything is oriented clockwise towards being with the family.

And for the business owner, in his eyes, his family eats up too much of his time. Whereas for the family man, in his eyes, his job eats up too much of his time.

[1 : 09] Well, what's the difference? These two men have a difference in priorities. You might assume that the businessman is in the wrong and the family man is in the right in the given hypothetical.

But the reality is both men have the potential to be wrong. The businessman could potentially rightly value work and profit.

After all, 1 Timothy 5.8 says, But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.

Or perhaps the businessman is familiar with Proverbs 14.23. There is profit in hard work, but mere talk leads to poverty. So it's conceivable that the businessman may have started out with honorable motives that made him work really hard and have long hours at work.

Not a 40-hour work week, but a 70-hour work week. In fact, he may be chiefly motivated to work for his family. And maybe he's wealthy and he wants to be a philanthropist for other families in need.

[2 : 19] And in that sense, he may be a truer family man, so to speak. But, as most of us have probably already thought, it is more likely that this individual is driven by a love of money, or a desire of security, or something wicked, because we just all instinctively know that this man is spending too much time at work.

And by consequence, neglecting his family, his church, himself, and most importantly, God. Well, what about the family man who cannot wait to get home?

He sounds like a good guy. But as I said, this man, he might sound better, but there's still the potential it's wrong. So let's just say he's hated by his co-workers.

They say things like, he never stays to help during our busy seasons. Or he spends time at work FaceTiming his wife and kids all the time. When is he going to get anything done?

Or perhaps they even say he's worthless and they hope he gets fired. So I think we all see the obvious problem with both of these men. They have an idol, one work, one family.

[3 : 34] The businessman turned God's good gift of work and provision into an object of worship for whatever reasons. Likewise, the family man turned God's good gift of the family into an object of worship for whatever reasons.

So therefore, both are in sin and both consciously or unconsciously, intentionally or unintentionally, are poorly stewarding their time. So as I alluded, there are a number of issues with both of these men in the given hypothetical.

But for our purposes today, I want you to notice the problem of time. If you were to counsel these two brothers, and I'm assuming they are Christians, and they came to you and they asked, how should I prioritize my time?

What would you tell them? And frankly, I doubt you even need this hypothetical. If you look around the room, I guarantee every single one of us in every single season of our life has asked this question.

How do I spend my time? How do I steward my time? And whenever we feel in life as though we've finally arrived, as though we finally have control over our time, as if we're stewarding it perfectly, something happens to disrupt that.

[4 : 53] A marriage, a new kid, a second kid, a new job, and so on and so forth. And like me, you feel like life just keeps getting faster and faster, and that you are losing more and more time.

And so we ask, how should I spend my time? How do I find balance in life? That's a word we love in this discussion. How do I know I'm not neglecting the responsibilities God has given me at work, at home, and at church, and anywhere else He has placed me?

So, of course, today I cannot tell you in specific detail how to manage your personal life with all its varied variables.

But in principle, I can tell you what it should look like for every Christian. But in practice, no, it can look very different, and that's okay. So the goal today is simple.

I want to show you from Scripture what should occupy our thoughts and determine our actions so as to better steward our time for the glory of God.

[6 : 02] So with that, we'll look at our text, Ephesians chapter 5, starting in verse 15. We'll be looking at verses 15 through 21. The Apostle Paul writes, Therefore, look critically how you are to walk, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time, for the days are evil.

For this reason, do not become fools, but discern what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, in this is debauchery, but be filled by the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, in hymns, in spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord from the heart, giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to God the Father, submitting to one another in fear of Christ.

So in this text today, there are five commandments, some do's and some don'ts, and these do's and don'ts serve as contrasts. But we're going to divide the text in three parts based on the contrasts.

So our outline for today, number one, be critical in your walk. And number two, understand the will of the Lord. And number three, be filled in the Spirit.

And I'll repeat these as we go along. So our first section today, number one, be critical in your walk. Looking at verses 15 through 16. Specifically, let's start with the first half of verse 15.

[7 : 40] Paul says, look critically at how you are to walk. So that's the first of our five commandments, the word look. In Greek, it is the imperative *blepete*, which literally means look, or some translate it as consider, but it has the idea of looking with your eyes.

And Paul modifies this commandment verb with the adverb *critically*, or some translations say *carefully*. But I prefer *critically*, because the way Paul is using this word is not in the sense that we should be cautious or timid in our walk, as the word *carefully* may imply.

Rather, Paul uses this word in a way to convey that we are to be tedious, that we are to really examine every weight and grain of our walk.

There's a high level of scrutiny in looking at our walk in this way. And our walk is simply Paul's way of describing our life with Christ and the progression of our sanctification over time.

So regarding this walk, we are to weigh it or to judge it by looking at it constantly. Now, for those of us worried about time and wanting to accomplish more each day, this is a challenging command.

[8 : 59] It is challenging because Paul, I think, is essentially saying we should make time to think and to think specifically about our walk. And I also assume in this, just knowing a little bit about Paul and other things he's written about, that he has praying in mind, that we should pray that God would enlighten us, that he would give us wisdom to discern our walk rightly, to know the true state of our stance before him.

And we don't like hearing that because we want to get something done that's tangible. We would never admit this, but functionally, sometimes, often, for some of us maybe, we treat prayer and quiet time as a waste of time.

And nonetheless, this is what the word of the Lord says. Paul, by implication, says, make time to think, to look, and to pray.

Discern your walk. So as you've lived this week and in the upcoming weeks, are you walking rightly with God? Are you examining yourself before God in prayer and in his word?

Are you practicing repentance when necessary? Are you practicing obedience and growing in your faith? In the second half of verse 15, Paul describes how we are to walk.

[10:22] He says, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time for the days are evil. Now, the very imagery of walking is a moment-to-moment progression.

This world is full of sin and wickedness. Paul wrote in the beginning of his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 2, verses 1 through 3, all about mankind apart from Christ.

And this includes you and I before Christ. He said of mankind that we are dead, that we are sinful, that we are following the way of the world, following Satan, controlled by the passions of our flesh. And Paul says all of that, and he says that we walked in that way. So he's building a contrast throughout his letters. Two paths, two ways of walking, two directions.

So in chapter 2, verses 1 through 3, we see what walking unwisely looks like. But now, Paul tells us we ought to walk wisely. Well, what does that actually mean?

[11:27] So in the ancient world, wisdom was not merely something you possessed intellectually or in your mind. rather, wisdom was knowing the way things truly are in the universe and then living in accord with that truth.

So you think about Stoicism, the ancient Stoics, this meant for them understanding the true nature of the universe through physics and math and literature and so on. And out of these things, they would create a philosophy, in their case, Stoicism, and then they would live in accord with that philosophy.

To live outside of accord with that philosophy was to be unwise. So there was this obedience idea wrapped up in wisdom, not just knowledge. And this was true for the Christians too, except we are aligning ourselves with the truth of God, the creator of the universe, and learning to live in light of that truth so as to change our thinking, our acts, and our living.

So walking in wisdom for Paul is walking in accord with the nature and the will of God. So we are to look critically at our walk to evaluate if we are walking in accord with the nature and will of God.

And this commandment comes with a good and necessary consequence. So looking at verse 16, walking in wisdom leads to, quote, redeeming the time for the days are evil.

[12:57] So for those of us tempted to think that stopping, quietly considering our walk, praying, evaluating ourselves before God, those of us who are tempted to think that that is a waste of time, Paul says just the opposite.

Paul says that by critically considering our walk so as to ensure that we walk in wisdom actually redeems the time.

And what is it redeemed from? The evil we would have committed had we not taken the time to critically examine ourselves in our walk. Paul says for the days are evil.

So we must be so careful in this world and through wisdom we not only avoid evil but we produce acts of righteousness when we live in accord with the truth of God and his word.

So it is worth the time to stop and look at our walk with God. In this we actually make good use of our time and not only the time that we sit quietly but the rest of the time as we prepare our hearts and our minds for the day because we have prepared ourselves in thought and prayer.

[14:12] But there is more to walking in wisdom more that will help us use our time better and so Paul goes on in verse 17 and this leads us to the second part of our outline.

Part number two do not become fools but understand the will of the Lord. Part number two do not become fools but understand the will of the Lord.

Paul writes in the first half of verse 17 for this reason do not become fools. So this is our second commandment of five in this text. Do not become as the commandment.

Do not become what? Don't become fools. For the sake of not wasting our time not wasting away our very lives Paul gives us the second commandment in this passage.

We ought not become fools. Well who is the fool? Proverbs 18 2 says a fool does not delight in understanding but only in revealing his own mind.

[15:10] He's a boaster a talker. Proverbs 29 11 says a fool always loses his temper but a wise man holds it back. And we could go on and on but ultimately we know the fool is the one who rejects Christ as the cornerstone.

Christ made this clear at the end of the Sermon on the Mount when he described the one who builds his house on the rock versus the fool who builds his house on the sand.

So to be a fool is to be unwise. To be a fool is to not consider your walk with God and to be a fool is to waste away the time God has given you.

Allowing your days to be in service to evil. So Paul says not to be foolish and he goes on second half of verse 17 but discern what the will of the Lord is.

That's commandment number three. Discern what the will of the Lord is. Well what is the will of the Lord? And Paul here is not speaking about what college you should go to, who you should marry, how many kids you should have, or any of those kind of life decisions though those are important.

[16:23] Paul is actually talking about the ultimate will of God for mankind and creation, the big plan. What is this plan? Well again, if you read all of Ephesians you would know Ephesians chapter one verse four, Paul writes of God's will and he says, even as God chose us, referring to the church, so even as God chose the church in Christ before the foundation of the world, so there it is, he's planned this, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

Paul continues, in love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ according to the purpose of his will.

And Paul goes on after describing this plan of salvation, it says in Ephesians chapter one verses nine through ten, that God has made known to us, these are Paul's words, known to us the mystery of his will according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth.

So, through Christ's death, sacrifice, resurrection, ascension, not only are we saved, but God is uniting all things, heaven and earth, creation, man, in Christ for his good plan to worship him and glorify him for eternity.

So, clearly, when Paul refers to the will of the Lord in our text in chapter five, verse 17, he is building on the will of the Lord that he opened his letter explaining.

[17:59] So, in sum, the will of the Lord is to save his people by placing them in Christ and uniting all things in Christ for his glories.

This is what we call the gospel. And so, you may wonder then, well, isn't Paul writing to the church in Ephesus? In other words, believers, wouldn't they already know the gospel?

Why would he command them to discern the will of the Lord if they already know it, if they already know the gospel? And again, Paul is discussing this discernment in light of the walking that we as believers are called to or commanded to examine.

In other words, Paul is saying we ought to consider and know the will of the Lord so well that we instinctively apply it to our everyday walk with him.

Whatever situation, whatever encounter, whatever the day brings, we are training ourselves consciously, intentionally, intentionally and daily to have gospel criteria informing our every desire, action, and decision.

[19:06] And we don't have time to examine all of Ephesians, but go read it for yourself this afternoon. It's short. And it will be clear that Paul has these things chiefly in mind concerning the will of the Lord and the life of the believer.

Three things in my mind. Number one, submission to Christ in all things. Number two, loving and living in harmony with the church. And number three, doing everything to the glory of God.

And of course, under this, you'll see things about relationships between wife, husband, slave, masters, children, parents, and so forth. But in summation, these are the three big areas, the ideas. And finally, we have our last section where we will spend most of our time. Section three, do not get drunk, but be filled in the spirit.

Verses 18 through 21. Do not get drunk, but be filled in the spirit. So the first half of verse 18, Paul says, do not get drunk with wine, in this is debauchery.

[20:17] And so we have commandment number four. He says, do not get drunk. Now this commandment, it may seem random or unrelated to Paul's flow of thought, but rest assured, it flows very well with his line of thought, and we will examine that in just a moment.

But I briefly wanted to comment on this, just because I know throughout our lives, maybe not necessarily in this church, but various relatives or friends or whoever, different traditions, this is kind of a controversy, should Christians drink or not.

And of course, I'm not going to dissect all of that or don't really want to spend a lot of time on that at all. I just want to note that Paul's commandment here is against drunkenness, not drinking.

There are some Christian brothers who refuse to drink and they claim it is a matter of wisdom, and I respect that view a lot. I grew up in a dry family for which I'm so thankful personally.

In fact, I've never had a drink, I'm 26 years old, but even I will tell you that for Paul, he does not pit living wisely against merely the act of drinking responsibly.

[21 : 32] drunkenness. In his flow of thought and discussing wise walking, he never condemns drinking responsibly, he condemns drunkenness. And we see the same idea pop up in 1 Corinthians 6, 12.

Paul writes, all things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything. So as believers, we have the freedom to drink responsibly, or we have the freedom to not drink at all, and neither brother is the weaker brother.

I cannot tell you how many times in college I had some cage stage bro come up to me and tell me I was not living in freedom because I didn't drink, that I was being legalistic even though I held that conviction privately.

And I just want to tell you I think that mindset of trying to convert people to drink or not to drink is ungodly. If you want to and they want to, that's totally fine and do it to the glory of God.

But don't ram a drink down someone's throat. And frankly, the truly weaker brother in this whole conversation is the one who feels the need to tell others what to do, whether to drink or not to drink.

[22 : 48] We have freedom to enjoy or not, and that's that. So there are just so many other more important things to discuss and have unity on, and this is just not one of them.

So with that aside, we can return to Paul's flow of thoughts. I think Paul picked on drunkenness in particular in this passage because it contrasts so well with the idea of critically considering our walk, walking wisely and as we'll see in a moment being filled by the spirit.

it. So the contrast is twofold in my mind. One, drunkenness represents the opposite of redeeming the time. Of course, all sin is sin, but there's something unique about drunkenness in that it is a complete and total waste of time.

Drunkenness does not do anything or accomplish anything except lead the drunk to ruin apart from Christ and faith in Christ. Number two, drunkenness is the complete opposite picture of the man who considers his walk and is thoughtful in how he plans to live so as to pursue life with God.

But the drunkard has no aim in life and gives no thought to tomorrow, just the next drink. In fact, Paul is probably quoting Proverbs 23 when he warns of drunkenness.

[24 : 18] So let me read just a portion of that to give you an idea of the thought world that he and his readers were in as they considered this. Solomon writes in Proverbs 23 verses 19 through 21, he says, Hear, my son, and be wise, and direct your heart in the way.

Be not among drunkards or among gluttonous eaters of meat, for the drunkard and the glutton will come to poverty and slumber will clothe them with rags. And Solomon goes on in that very same chapter in verses 29 through 35, which says this, Solomon asked, Who has woe?

Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complained? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? And he answers, Those who tarry long over wine.

Do not look at wine when it is red or sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things and your heart utter perverse things.

You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. They struck me, you will say, but I was not hurt.

[25 : 37] They beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I must have another drink. So clearly the drunkard described in Proverbs 23 is enslaved to the bottle and as a result his life amounts only to what the bottle allows as his master.

And drunkenness is a cruel master. But for those of us in Christ, regardless of what prior sins we were enslaved to, we have freedom in Christ.

In Ephesians chapter 1 verse 13, Paul says upon believing in Christ in response to the gospel, we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of his glory.

So Paul's flow of thought in our text, chapter 5 verses 15 through 21 continues then and he's saying no longer shall you be filled with wine or in other words, do not get drunk with wine, but he goes on in the second half of verse 18, but be filled by the Spirit.

And this is the fifth and final commandment in our text, be filled by the Spirit. So for us to understand what Paul means by this, this phrase be filled by the Spirit, we have to look at the Greek and the Greek verb here is *pluste*.

[27 : 07] Now, this verb is a present passive imperative verb. There's your geeky grammar for the day. And this tells us a few things.

The present tense means this is an ongoing action that we, as believers, are commanded to practice and obey day to day, moment to moment. It's to characterize us being filled by the Spirit. But Paul is not saying that we gain and lose the Spirit throughout our lives. We just saw that we are sealed with the Spirit in Ephesians chapter 1. So clearly that's not what Paul means.

No, what he means is that we are to practice obeying the Spirit as he directs us. Not obeying the drunkenness of wine, but obeying the sobering joy and wisdom of the Spirit.

And the passive voice of the Greek verb tells us that we are being filled by the Spirit. In other words, we are not being more filled with the Spirit. We fully possess the Spirit by God's grace because of the work of Christ.

[28 : 12] What Paul is saying here, rather, is that the Spirit is filling us with something. And I believe Paul is referring to the fullness of God. In Ephesians chapter 3, verse 19, Paul was praying for the church, and he prays that the church would know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

And Paul prays this because this is not something you and I can do, only something God in his grace toward us in Christ can do. Daniel Wallace, an evangelical Greek professor, tracing the language of fill or filling in Ephesians, summarizes the idea best when he says, quote, believers are to be filled by Christ, by means of the Spirit, with the content of the fullness of God.

I love that Trinitarian imagery of God working on our behalf. So Paul is not talking about the indwelling of the Spirit.

That work is done and sealed for us who are in Christ. Now he is saying we are to be sanctified by means of the Spirit, filling us with the fullness of God.

And finally, the verb is in the imperative, which means it is a command for us to obey. So you might wonder, how can this verb be a command for us to obey, and at the same time imply that it is the Spirit who is carrying out the action?

[29 : 46] Well, stick around for our series in Romans. But in short, it is clear. The Spirit is filling us with the fullness of God and we must be willing and obedient participants in that work.

Not the work of salvation, which is entirely a work of God, but a work of obedience, a work of sanctification, in which we cooperate by grace. So kill off your selfish desires, your idols, your values, and your thoughts.

Die to self and give of yourself fully to God by cooperating with the leading of the Spirit, as He continually fills you with the fullness of God.

A simplification of this idea is found in John 3.30. Quote, He must increase, but I must decrease. Now, here we are and we still have three verses to go, but all of Paul's commandments in this section end here in verse 18.

Verses 19 through 21, which we are about to look at, describe the results or the activity of the one who is being filled by the Holy Spirit, the one looking critically. So we're about to see what life looks like for those of us who obey and keep these five commandments.

[31 : 05] So verse 19, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord from the heart.

So as I said, we participate in true worship from the heart only when we keep these five commandments we've just considered. And note that when Paul says one another, he's not talking about you and your friends or you and your family primarily, though those would certainly be good relationships to worship God with.

But Paul primarily has the church body in mind. He's writing to the church of Ephesus after all. And Paul goes on to describe the wise walker, the one being filled by the spirit and says in verse 20, giving thanks always and for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father. Again, notice that communal language. Paul says our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who critically considers his walk and is not drunk with wine but filled by the spirit with the fullness of God is one who gives thanks always and for all things.

So again, I ask, is your life marked by a practice of thanksgiving? Are you generally thankful for everything at all times in your life, the good and the bad?

[32 : 33] Now is an opportunity to critically examine your walk. And finally, verse 21, the last description for those of us who keep these five commandments.

Paul writes, submitting to one another in fear of Christ. I say yet again, Paul is talking about the church primarily at this point.

The church ought to submit to one another, and this may sound like a commandment in English, and it certainly is a commandment elsewhere in scripture, but in our text, in Greek, it is clearly not a commandment, but describing the result of keeping the actual commandments in this passage.

This submission is to be done in fear of Christ. The idea here certainly is reverence for Christ, but it is certainly also a genuine fear of Christ's chastisement for disobedience.

How better and how much more satisfying it is for us to simply obey Him. So in summary, Paul tells us in this passage that we are not to be unwise or foolish or waste our time in drunkenness.

[33 : 51] Rather, we are to look critically at our walk. We are to discern the will of the Lord with gospel criteria for any given circumstance, any given encounter in this life.

And we must be continually filled by the Spirit. And when we obey these commandments, our life will be characterized by speaking and singing scriptural truths, giving thanks always to God and submitting to one another.

And all of this is in the context of the local church. So there you have it. Now you're all wondering what did most of that have to do with me stewarding my time better?

What happened to those questions asked at the beginning? How should I spend my time? How do I find balance in life? How do I know I'm not neglecting the responsibilities God has given me at work, at home, and at church?

But based on our text today, and others that we do not have time for, I want to suggest strongly that these are the wrong questions. These are not questions we as Christians should really be all that worried about.

[35 : 03] and I would even say they're the wrong focus. But Paul has provided a different way, a better way to spend our lives, to consider how we spend our lives, to the glory of God.

If you notice, Paul's emphasis in this text is not on a checklist. It is not on a pie chart for how you should break up your hours and minutes throughout the day, nor is a step-by-step process for better managing your time.

In fact, the aspect of time in this text is not even the focus or the main thing. It is a footnote to Paul's larger concern. And it is a footnote that is taken good care of if Paul's larger concern is rightly accounted for.

So imagine that, this time management thing, this thing we're all wondering about, this thing that there's an article published on every single day from all kinds of people with all kinds of views, not a big deal to Paul.

And yet, Paul includes this pervasive phrase, redeeming the time. He literally says, all of your time is redeemed in the flow of his larger concern.

[36 : 17] Now that's an astounding claim. And it is an astounding claim he does not pause to make. I think if you went and found all these 20 year old bloggers who think a lot of people are reading their blogs but they aren't, talking about time management, and they haven't figured it out yet because they're 20, would be shocked when they read this passage because it is such a brief, brief footnote.

But Paul makes it. He says, all the time is redeemed. And so I think what this reveals to us is that we are 21st century American Christians.

In other words, we still ask the kinds of questions the world, the culture around us ask. We don't realize how much our thinking really is of this culture, this time and place rather than biblically informed.

We have thought about time the way the world around us has thought about time and therefore we have asked the questions they ask about time, though we try to give our Bible answers.

But hear this, God is less concerned about how you spend your time, less concerned about how you spend your time, and more concerned about what kind of person you are and if you are faithful.

[37 : 36] And of course, if you are the kind of person God is calling you to be, and if you are faithful, then you will use your time wisely. You see the freedom in this kind of thinking.

And it's worth mentioning just again to show you how culturally informed we are in the way we think about time, that the idea of the eight hour work day or the recreational weekend or even the 90 minute church service are all man-made ideas.

And that's not to say they're inherently evil, it's just to recognize these are not biblically authoritative establishments that we often treat as biblically authoritative establishments.

And in fact, in all of scripture, you will never find God say anything about hours and minutes that we must do this or that. You won't find it.

The Bible just does not discuss or talk about time the way we 21st century Americans do. So we need to change the way we think about time to conform to the larger concerns that God has breathed into Paul in the writing of Ephesians.

[38 : 47] things. Now to offer some practical advice, I'm going to lean on an author named Rick Siegel. Perhaps you're familiar with him from *Desiring God*.

He offers five ways to use time wisely and not waste time thinking about time management. And we'll cover these quickly.

So five ways. Number one, as a Christian, know you are never going to run out of time. What a wonderful thought. We have all of eternity to do the things we dream to do and to do it all to the glory of God without sin.

It's irrational to be concerned about running out of time. Number two, remember people are the object of your Christian vocation, not the means.

So do not view people as anything other than people, the mission field, and you will see priority take shape in your life. That is God inspired. And everyone you meet either needs to know Jesus or know more about Jesus.

[39 : 54] And we as Christians can offer both. One to the believer, the other to the unbeliever. Number three, seek to de-automate your relationships.

So spend less time, and I would argue preferably no time, wasting your life on social media, and other places where you fake relationships. go spend time somewhere with someone and develop a true friendship.

Siegel adds that we ought to see unexpected interruptions from people in our day as a divine appointment, opportunities for God to use us in some way to encourage or equip or evangelize somebody else, to serve others.

And number four, detox on output and thrive instead on the greatest commandments. Don't worry as much about productivity if you are faithful to God and concerning your walk.

Productivity will come. But instead thrive on the greatest commandment. Love God and love neighbor. This is the greatest commandment that dictates everything we do.

[41 : 06] If you find that all of your time is not geared towards loving God and loving neighbor, I guarantee you, you are wasting your life away. This is scripture.

And number five, make the glory of God the goal of all your activity. As Paul says, whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, do it all unto the glory of God.

Your job, your family, your church involvement, your chores, your reading, your entertainment, everything, your vacations, you don't get a break from God. God is your rest.

And it should be redeemed in such a way so as to glorify God. So that's what Rick Siegel has to say, but there's something close to home here at CFC that we need to discuss before we close, something specific.

It's my concern as well as the elders that not that there's a list of names or anything like that, but it's just a growing recognition that more and more people are not making time for our church outside of Sunday morning.

[42 : 16] It's been a hectic season these past few years. Babies are flying out all over the place. People are getting married and just life is moving. But it's been our observation that many are turning more and more inward to their families at the expense of the church.

And please hear me, families, extremely important, extremely, but I fear they're being used as an excuse far too often. Our cleaning crews, just for example, barely exist.

Just last week, Madison and I, it took us about three hours to clean the building by ourselves. Sarah Kohler was there helpfully watching the kids so we could work. So I guess the three of us were there, but the point is it took us way longer than it should.

And there should be way more volunteers. I remember the days here when our clean crews averaged 15 to 20 people and it took 40 minutes. And it was fun. And that happens regularly because so few are volunteering.

I've asked before and I can't tell you how many times someone has said, well it's busy with a new baby. And I just, you know, really like, I didn't realize both parents needed to be home to watch one baby.

[43 : 39] Let alone you could both come and we have people like Sarah Kohler or whoever watch the kids while the rest of us clean. It's not difficult to figure out. Likewise, our volunteers for child care also barely exist.

The same few people are taking care of that burden every week for the rest of us. And the sad one about this is that most of us are here any given Sunday so why is it a lot of us can't volunteer our time to help out with child care?

And I could go on but I just offer these as a few simple and basic examples that show our church is being neglected by some of its own members. members. And I don't know what to conclude about that other than seeing people become less willing to sacrificially make time to serve the body. And this is something we need to remind ourselves. God is not merely calling you to serve the church when it is convenient or mutually beneficial. Far more often, in fact, almost exclusively, the New Testament describes believers serving sacrificially through their time and their talents and their money.

So notice that key word, sacrificially. It's not easy, but it's normal for the believer. We throw around phrases like, whatever is best for my family as our all encompassing criteria.

[45 : 07] But have you considered that what is best for your family may be to take them to church at an inconvenient time, to sacrificially serve, and by that example teach them, your wife, your husband, your kids, teach them, life is about the glory of God, not the comfort of man.

I mean, consider Christ. He left the glories of heaven for fallen earth. He was worshipped continually by angels in heaven. He had comfort, power, glory beyond imagination.

And yet, we know from Philippians, he took the form of a man, took the form of a slave. He was mocked, despised, rejected, and ultimately killed.

And yet, this was his plan. He came to do it. A 30-year project in his earthly life, by the way, a project in eternity, but that's for another day. Acts 2, verse 23, this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. Christ allowed and sovereignly planned great wickedness and great shame to be done to his son without sin. And why? To serve and establish the church, the people of God.

[46 : 29] We needed someone to pay the penalty we owed for our sins to God the Father. And Christ did not merely suffer a few nails on a cross, but he suffered the wrath of God, something far more terrible and unimaginable that we will never experience as believers.

And he did all of this to serve his bride, the church, for his glory. Now what I'm about to say is a massive understatement, but imagine the inconvenience this would have been for Jesus.

And yet we struggle to show up on Saturday morning to vacuum the carpet. Now you may be strongly agreeing with me and the elders about this growing concern.

You may strongly disagree right now. Whatever your thoughts, whatever your conclusions, in light of our text today, I just ask that you pray about it. That you look critically at your walk and discern the will of the Lord.

Be honest with yourself and be open to the Spirit's leading if you begin to see that you could serve more. So in closing, if you want to spend your time well, then watch your walk closely and discern the will of the Lord.

[47 : 49] Use this as your criteria for everything you do. Do not worry about managing time so much. That's merely a symptom. Look critically at your walk before God and all of your time, all of it, whatever you are doing, it will be redeemed time for the good of man and the glory of God.

So to that end, let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.