

Probably the most frequently asked question I get when preaching out of town:

“Why are we losing so many of our young people?” Well, there are many answers suggested:

- teenagers and young adults get caught up with worldly friends and are led away
- they date ungodly people and marry non-Christians and are drawn away
- immoral activity, drug abuse, worldliness has allured their sight

And we do see that. We see young Christians overtaken by the passing pleasures of sin.

But more commonly, it isn't the big sin, but the SLOW FADE...

When young Christians fail to learn the simplest of skills: **MAKING TIME FOR GOD.**

Bottom Line: We just get so busy. Too busy to find the time for things like Prayer, Study or Worship.

15 – High School – new friends, more homework, extra curricular activities -- Less Time For God

16 – Add a plastic card with your face on it, tons of places to go and do – Less Time For God

17 – Have to get a job to pay for that gasoline or save for college – Less Time For God

19 – Off to College/Military, new friends, more activities, a whole new world – Less Time For God

21 – Then I fall in love -- every spare second and penny goes to it – Less Time For God

22 – Graduation! – free time? No! Now I start a career, work to pay off loans – Less Time For God

23 – Get Married! – new responsibilities, new home – Less Time For God

25 – First Kid ... and on and on and on ... I'm 37 and have more to care for and more to do than ever!

---And maybe you can see where this going – to ADULTS who don't make time for God, who then raise children who don't make as much time for God, and the cycle continues. --

--- With a life like that, something has to give! Too often that something is GOD!

One day this young adult wakes up and realized: I don't know God anymore. My faith is not real.

Well, what is your defense? I mean, we can't stop these events from happening.

How can we keep God in the middle of our increasingly busy lives???

Worth Noting – This is not a “youth problem.” In fact, I would go so far to say that youth who fail to make time for God are likely just following in the footsteps of parents who don't make time for God. This is a family issue. The need to Give God More of our Time is a personal one to us all. So while I hope this message will appeal directly to our younger generation, I think you will find it at LEAST as applicable to we adults as well.

I want to give you a few practical points that can help, but first, we have to make a stand!

Ephesians 5:15-17 – *I will not blindly follow the worldly walk of the world, which slowly but steadily leads away from God. I will make BETTER usage of my time. I will (not find) but MAKE time for God.*

I will not be a fool, but wise, in that I will take the time to consider what God wants, what God deserves.

-- Who is with me? Who wants to give God more of your life and give Jesus the place in my life He rightly deserves: **“First Place in Everything!” (Col. 1:18)**

I. Make Worship Non-Negotiable

- a. I will not compromise. I will let nothing take this time from me. I will worship.
- b. Now, 4 hours of worship per week (Sun/Wed) does not a Christian make, and God certainly deserves a bigger piece of the pie than that, but what a place to start!
- c. **Eph. 5:17-21** – All of the good usage of time listed here are accom. in WORSHIP!
 - i. *Understand what the will of the Lord is*
 - ii. *Be filled with (influenced by) the Holy Spirit*
 - iii. *Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*
 - iv. *Giving thanks to God / And reverently subject to Jesus!*
- d. **Heb. 10:22-25** – Is not about “don't miss worship” but “who would miss this?” – this is time for God and God's people that is important and ... Non-Negotiable!
- e. Extra Activities, Summer Jobs, Career Path, Class Schedules – all important, all fall BEHIND the 3 services I have committed to God!
- f. Not saying SIN to miss worship for work, but even adults would amen this point!

-- Our Second Tip Reflects that we want to create MORE opportunities for God than 3 Weekly Assemblies --

II. Put God on your Schedule

- a. We all have very busy, event filled lives, so most of us use calendars to keep things organized
 - i. iCAL for iphone or imac, PC Calendar, Google Calendar – if it is important to us, and we don't want to forget it, it goes (in our phones) or (on our fridge)
 1. great things like VACATIONS and BALLGAMES
 2. not so fun things like ORTHO APPT, or SAT exam
- b. If it matters, if it is important, if I can't forget it: it gets PLANNED, NOTED and MARKED
 - i. There may be other somewhat important things going on, but if forgotten: no big deal
- c. What about Time for God? What about the importance of fitting him in the WEEK?
 - i. *If we just hope that Bible Study or Godly service will happen, it won't – no time.*
- d. **Luke 12:15-19** – Jesus is addressing worldliness and greed here, but look at the illustration he builds. This guy is a planner, and a good one.
 - i. He TAKES STOCK, MAKES PLANS, EXECUTES, THINGS AHEAD, and HAS HIS RETIREMENT MAPPED OUT. He is not ridiculed for these skills...
 - ii. But because He wasn't using them for GOD! (“not rich toward God”)
 1. All that work, scheduling and success for things that don't matter!
- e. Let's take some of that energy, which shows where our heart is, and schedule time for God
 - i. *Put Gospel Meetings, Youth Weekends, Singing, or similar events on your calendars*
 - ii. *If your church has a group study or youth study, get that down and planned for.*
 - iii. *Bible Reading Schedules – software or fridge copy, marking boxes each week.*
 - iv. *Family Study Time – Tue/Thu 7pm – everybody knows it.*
 - v. *Schedule time on the calendar to have brethren over to get to know them better.*
- f. Plan your life in layers of importance --- start with God and make everything else fit around Him

Well, maybe you've tried to give God more importance and time and it hasn't held: this next point is for you...

III. Build Cords of Two or More

- a. What do cords have to do with closeness to God? Well, maybe a lot more than you think
- b. **Eccl. 4:9-12** – The idea is pretty simple: there are some things you may not be able to do on your own, but TWO is stronger than one (horse pulls 2500lb, two horses pull 12,500lb!)
 - i. And three, well, a cord of 3 is not easily broken.
 - ii. This passage is about the power of partnerships, teamwork, doing great things together!
 - iii. We will be much more successful when we have others working with us, supporting.
- c. We sometimes call these “accountability partners.” Someone to answer to sure, but someone to be responsible to, where your success is their success
- d. Example) **Reading Program!** – How many of us have started these and not finished
 - i. I think there are 5 Mark Robert reading programs (incomplete) under my fridge!
 - ii. But David Osteen called at the end of December and said: LET'S DO THIS!
 - iii. We have gone through once and are on our second go around – texted DAILY!
- e. Example) **Girl wanting to sit with Older Members** – Great idea but not likely to be remembered. Until she got with two others, and they would remind, do it together!
- f. Example) **Hospitality** – Two families alternating homes and scheduling it together!
- g. So TODAY, pick an area of your life where God will get more time. Where you will start something for Him, for His people, that you want to stick with ... AND.. find some friends to do it with you. Set up matching schedules, get out calendars together, pick each other up, succeed!

“Okay,” someone says, “These are all great ideas but I really don't have the time!” Alright, consider this:

IV. Trim the Electro-Fat

- a. No this is not some diet that will give you more energy. But it may be a diet that will give you more time. Whether worship service, bible reading, visiting or hosting or teaching classes, folks are quick to say: I just don't have the time. That may be true, but where is all that time going?
- b. I know there are some vital things in life that demand our time, though we should put God first.
- c. But there is often a whole lot of little electro-fats that end up taking huge chunks out of our lives
 - i. Watching favorite tv shows – National Avg: 35hr per week! **That's a TON of time!**
 - ii. Video Games – Nat. Avg – 8th grade boys: 23hr!; girls 16hr; college: girls 6, boys 16.

- iii. S.M. / Online – Kids: 50 hours per week online ... **Build dozens of cards for folks**
- iv. Texting and Calls- Another 16 hours per week! **Do your Bible class lessons for a year!**
- d. KJV on **Eph. 5** says, “*Redeem the Time*” which means “**Rescue from Loss!**” I think we’ve got a lot of weekly time that needs to be rescued from loss, don’t you?
 - i. The problem is we don’t think of this time as choosing tech over God, we just go with the tech and complain we wish we had more time for God. Let’s thing differently about that!
- e. **Daniel 6:10-11** – What does Daniel’s story have to do with trimming TV time? Maybe a lot!
 - i. When forced to choose between Time For God or His Life, Daniel chose Time for God.
 - 1. How many ways could he have compromised and lived? Not an option for him.
 - 2. How often do we have a choice between Time for God
 - a. *Bible Reading, Worship services, studies, gospel meetings, visiting others, writing cards, encouraging God’s people ...*
 - 3. And ... time at a computer desk, on the couch, or staring at our phone...
 - a. *Giving pointless status updates, drawing something, watching AI 3rd time*
 - 4. I am shamed by how far I sometimes am from Daniel’s commitment....
 - a. And inspired to see these decisions and choices, and choose better!
 - ii. Small changes in these areas could give you a solid hour for God per day – SCHEDULE!

But among all of these, there is one tried and true tactic for Giving God the Attention He Deserves, Guaranteed

V. **Give God Daily Status Updates**

- a. Making time for God is important, critical even, but in our culture, it is NOT EASY. We are going to need to lean on the best tool in our arsenal of godliness: PRAYER, and lots of it!
- b. This is a status update worth making: in the time it would take to post online how you saw a roach on the floor of a restaurant, and watch as 24 people “like” it and 13 friends comment: “ewww”... you could have used that time to share all kinds of important things with God:
 - i. *God, here is what you have done for me. I am humbled by what you have invested in me.*
 - ii. *God, here is what I have been doing. I’ve not been giving you the attention You deserve.*
 - iii. *God, here are the things I know you want from me. The things I can do to please you more.*
 - iv. *God, here is what I am going to do. Here is HOW I am going to honor you better than ever!*
- c. **Phil. 4:6-7** – God wants to hear from us, everything we are FEELING, FACING, WORKING ON.
 - i. And you will never be so honest about where you are and want to be as when you are speaking to God. We know He knows us inside and out and can hide nothing from Him.
 - 1. Talk to Him about your struggles with your schedule and shortcomings
 - a. **Not because He needs to hear them, but because He knows you need to hear yourself admit and acknowledge them.**
 - 2. When you start a Plan, when you take your first stumble, when you see it working... talk to God about it all.
- d. And Prayer is what we call a Double Win! –
 - i. First, it IS actually taking time for God! Right then!
 - ii. Second, it will help you be honest and forge a path for Him and INSPIRE YOU (v8-9)

Conclusion: Perhaps some of the things we have shared will help you PLACE or KEEP God in the center of your LIFE by keeping Him in the center of your DAY, or maybe you can make a list of helpful tips on your own

But no matter HOW you do it ... DO it. Do it now. Today. Make those changes. Give him your time, your life. Because, (**Eph. 5:16**) – “**The Days are Evil.**” Your life is short, uncertain, and passes so quickly. And we will have an eternity... an eternity, to contemplate what we did with the time God graciously gave us. How will use this moment, this precious moment, for God?