

"In His Time"

Introduction. The book of Ecclesiastes starts with the oft-repeated phrase "Vanity of vanities," which means "utter futility." All of the wise men of the Bible tell us that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge (Proverbs 1:7). In Ecclesiastes, Solomon is desperate for an answer to the question, "Why am I here?" Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:25 takes us on a tour with Solomon in his quest for happiness, but we come back empty handed (Ecclesiastes 2:1-11).

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 contains some of the best known words in the Bible. There is indeed a time for all events in life. Many want time to be frozen and live in the past, but this has never been God's plan.

The trouble is that we only see a fraction of the movement at any one time. We are desperately nearsighted when we view life -- we simply cannot stand back far enough to take it all in. God sees the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10). Instead of frozen perfection, our world is like a kaleidoscope, with each period of time having its own character (Ecclesiastes 3:11).

Our very life is a gift from God, therefore we must make the most of it. An anonymous source said, "More time is wasted not in hours but in minutes. A bucket with a small hole in the bottom gets just as empty as a bucket that is deliberately kicked over." In this lesson we are going to comment upon five groups who must use their time wisely.

I. ***Parents Need To See The Value Of Time***

A. It is amazing how fast our children grow up!

1. We need to enjoy our children while we can, before they leave home (Psalm 127:3-5). Some parents are so busy making a living they forget to make a life and pleasant memories for their children. What good is your money if you cannot enjoy it?
2. Parents rate their inability to spend enough time with their children as the greatest threat to the family. In a survey conducted for the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Corp., 35% pointed to time constraints as the most important reason for the decline in family values. Another 22% mentioned a lack of parental discipline. While 63% listed family as their greatest source of pleasure, only 44% described the quality of family life in America as good or excellent. And only 34% expected it to be good or excellent by 1999. Despite their expressed desire for more family time, two-thirds of those surveyed say they would probably accept a job that required more time away from home if it offered higher income or greater prestige.

- B. You will never regret the time spent with your children. It is an investment.
 - 1. Where will your children learn their values (Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:21)?
 - 2. Will they learn them from sports stars or from the examples in the Bible? Will they look to Enoch, Rebekah, Noah, Ruth, Joshua, Priscilla, Joseph, Mary or the Lord?

II. ***Husbands And Wives Need To See The Value Of Time***

- A. Sociologists claim that one reason for the increasing number of divorces among middle age couples is that they built their lives around the children, then the children moved away from home.
 - 1. Husbands and wives must learn to enjoy each other's company (Deuteronomy 24:5; Proverbs 5:15-21).
 - 2. They must think long and hard about compatibility before marriage. Marriage is intended to be uplifting in its design (Genesis 2:24).
- B. One of the finest lessons you could ever hear on adultery is found in Proverbs 7:15-27.
 - 1. There are many lessons from a harlot (attire, bedroom, perfume and flattery).
 - 2. You learn the plain lesson that you belong to each other (1 Corinthians 7:2-5).
- C. Children need good parents, but they also need to see husbands and wives who are still deeply in love with each other.
 - 1. Where else are they going to find an example of a godly couple?
 - 2. The best way to be a good father to your children is to be a good husband to their mother.

III. ***Young People Need To See The Value Of Time***

- A. You are only young once (Ecclesiastes 11:9-12:7).
 - 1. God remembered you in your youth, so it is only right for you to remember God in your youth.
 - 2. Children need to be obedient and respectful. They need to honor, love and care for their parents. Children need to be helpful and dependable (Luke 2:52).
- B. There are many choices you will have to make.
 - 1. There will be a choice of friends.
 - 2. There will be a choice of your reputation.
 - 3. There will be a choice as to whether you will serve God.
 - 4. There will be a choice of your occupation.
 - 5. There will be a choice of your mate.
- C. God deserves your loyalty. The end result is a happier life and a happier home. Who would not want that result?

IV. **Christians Need To See The Value Of Time**

- A. Babes in Christ are to grow (1 Peter 2:1-2).
 - 1. That means that one must purposefully take the time to study and meditate.
 - 2. That will cause one to grow (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 6:1-3).
 - 3. Martin Luther once said, "I have so much to do today that I shall spend the first 3 hours in prayer."
- B. There must be a period of growth before teaching others (James 3:1).
 - 1. The Lord's church does not benefit from half-converted preachers or teachers.
 - 2. Just like in a marriage, a young couple has no business getting married until they have firmly decided to make that commitment (Luke 14:28).
- C. Growth is needed before men become elders and deacons (1 Timothy 3:6, 10).
 - 1. So many churches desperately lack leadership now. This can cause the premature death of many good congregations around the country.
 - 2. But qualifications take time to develop. Therefore, men need to be applying themselves early in their life so will have the time to properly mature.

V. **Churches Need To See The Value Of Time**

- A. Growth comes with peace and edification (Acts 9:31).
 - 1. We need to make opportunities and emphasize our obligation to act upon those opportunities (2 Corinthians 5:10-11).
 - 2. Those opportunities can include gospel meetings and Bible classes. We need to use them for purposes such as inviting others to study the Bible and teaching young people to become Christians and to make wise choices as it relates to spouses.
 - 3. We all want numerical growth, but sometimes in order to grow, congregations have to prune dead branches and put away those who are rebellious (2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 5:13).
- B. Congregations need to foster good relations between brethren. If problems arise, they need to be dealt with in the proper fashion (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17). This will promote peace and harmony.

Conclusion. Arnold Bennett said, "Time is the inexplicable raw material of everything. With it, all is possible; without it, nothing. The supply of time is truly a daily miracle, an affair genuinely astonishing when one examines it. It is the most precious of possessions. No one can take it from you. And no one receives either more or less than you receive. Moreover, you

cannot draw on its future.” We must learn to number our days so that we may “apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalm 90:12).