

Time #3: Sin Is Using Shortcuts When God Says, “Take Your Time” Ephesians 5:15-21

Introduction:

- A. America – the country of shortcuts and fast lanes. (We’re the only nation on earth with a mountain called “Rushmore”) (*The Applause of Heaven* by Max Lucado, page 18).
 - B. I read an article that created a great deal of anxiety in me. It was entitled, “If You Are 35, You Have 500 Days to Live.” Subtract the time you will spend sleeping, working, and tending to personal matters such as hygiene, odd chores, eating, and traveling. In the next 36 years you have 500 days of leisure. If this world is all there is, then none of us should waste our time praying. We should be literally grabbing for all the gusto we can get (Ben Patterson, *Leadership* Winter 1992, page 117).
 - C. Joe Little: What time is it?
Lois: The clock on the car is right...except, it is an hour fast...and it is two minutes slow.
 - D. Sin can be a time issue – wanting a legitimate need filled faster than God wants it met.
 - E. It may be that here is the best point at which to note a grim fact about the works of the flesh. Without exception, every one of them is a perversion of something which is in itself good. Immorality, impurity, licentiousness are perversions of the sexual instinct which is in itself a lovely thing and part of love. Idolatry is a perversion of worship, and was begun as an aid to worship. Sorcery is a perversion of the use of healing drugs in medicine. Envy, jealousy, and strife are perversions of that noble ambition and desire to do well which can be a spur to greatness. Enmity and anger are a perversion of that righteous indignation without which the passion for goodness cannot exist. Dissension and the party spirit are a perversion of the devotion to principle which can produce the martyr. Drunkenness and carousing are the perversion of the happy joy of social fellowship and of the things which men can happily and legitimately enjoy. Nowhere is there better illustrated the power of evil to take beauty and to twist it into ugliness, to take the finest things and to make them an avenue for sin. The awfulness of the power of sin lies precisely in its ability to take the raw material of potential goodness and turn it into the material of evil (*Flesh and Spirit* by William Barclay, page 39).
- I. GOD WANTS ME TO USE TIME WISELY.
- A. Since time is limited, it’s foolish not to. Ephesians 5:15,16; Hebrews 9:27
 - B. Good time management is found in God’s will. Ephesians 5:17
 - C. God is often late according to my schedule.
 - D. Man tries to find happiness by intoxication, highs, and quick fixes. Ephesians 5:18
- II. GOD’S WAY.
- A. Through the Spirit, which includes: Ephesians 5:18
 - 1. Obedience which may take more time than I want to invest. Acts 5:32
 - 2. Growing faith, which takes time. Hebrews 11:6; Romans 10:17
 - 3. Repentance, which is embarrassing. Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30,31

4. Acknowledging Jesus, which can bring ridicule. Matthew 10:32,33; John 12:42,43
 5. Being baptized, which may not make any sense to me. Acts 2:38
 6. Denying myself which seems like the way of a loser – a waste of time. Luke 9:23-26
 7. Rejoicing in pain – a waste of time according to HST. Romans 5:1-5; James 1:2-5
 - a. One of the great deceptions of our day: “I know God wants me to be happy.”
 - (1) “Happiness means absence of pain, thrilling pleasure, fun, entertainment.”
 - (2) “I know what is fun for me.”
 - (3) “Therefore, I will decide what God wants me to be and do.”
 - (4) “Because I know God wants me to be happy.”
 - b. The truth is: God wants me to be faithful and fruitful.
 - c. But fruit sowing, fruit growing, and fruit gathering is not altogether and always fun.
 - d. It is profitable when the result is the fruit of the Spirit.
 - e. This makes some hard scripture more easily understood.
 8. But if I cannot be converted to the Spirit’s way, I will look for happiness – the best way to spend my time – in drunkenness:
 - a. In drugs and alcohol.
 - b. In money.
 - c. In human success.
 - d. In pleasure.
 - e. In controlling others.
- B. Worship, which is not a waste of time, but a wise investment. Ephesians 5:19
- C. Gratitude. Ephesians 5:20
1. Will pay generous dividends of contentment.
 2. Will give me quality time.
- D. Submitting to others which may take longer than exercising my power, throwing my weight around, intimidating others. Ephesians 5:21; Matthew 20:25-28
1. In the home. Ephesians 5:22-6:4
 2. In business. Ephesians 6:5-9

Conclusion:

- A. I need wisdom in using time.
- B. God’s way is not always the quickest, but it is always the best.
- C. There is a time for urgency – accepting God’s grace. 2 Corinthians 6:1-2