

[*Seasons of Love* from Rent] http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x8iTeDI_Wug

How do you measure the 525,600 minutes of a year in your life?

The song says that it is measured in love. The 525,600 minutes of a year in your life are measured by the impact of your love in the life of others. And that's what we want to talk about today, the impact of your life.

It was Washington Redskins running back Clinton Portis who said, "When you measure someone's life, it's not about the time they had, but the impact." What Portis is saying is that a person's life is not about the length of their days, but the impact that those days have on others.

This gift of time that God grants to each of us is given equally. No one person has more hours in a day than another; but the impact of those hours is never the same!

So do you ever think about how you use those 525,600 minutes that make up a year in your life?

Well someone has figured out that in the lifetime of the average North American they will spend:

Six months sitting at stoplights,
Eight months opening junk mail,
One year looking for misplaced objects,
2 years unsuccessfully returning phone calls,
5 years waiting in line,
6 years eating and,
21 years watching television.

Not exactly the way to make an impact with the time God gives to us! And if those statistics don't get your attention listen to this.

There was an article published that was entitled, "If You Are 35, You Have 500 Days to Live." The article went on to contend that when you subtract the time you spend sleeping, working, tending to personal matters, eating, traveling, doing chores, attending to personal hygiene, and add in the miscellaneous time stealers, in the next 36

years (that's 13,140 days) you will have only 500 days to spend as you wish. When you put your time into that perspective it really causes you to think about the impact of the minutes you have been given.

But it is not just the time, it's also the timing.

In the days before modern harbors, a ship had to wait for the flood tide before it could make it to port. A ship would wait off port, waiting for the moment when it could ride the tide into the harbor. So the captain and the crew were ready and waiting for that one moment for they knew that if they missed it, they would have to wait for another tide to come in. The term for this situation in Latin was 'ob portus.' From which we get our word 'opportunity.'

Every one of us has had missed opportunities in our lives. There have been stocks we should have invested in, the job we should have taken, the pass we should have caught, the point we should have raised, the relationship we should have nurtured and the opportunities to share Christ that we passed up.

Time and opportunity are just some of the topics that many write about in the topic of time-management. But as Stephen Covey points out, "time management" is really a misnomer. The challenge, Covey says, is not to manage time, but to manage ourselves.

It is interesting to note that when you read the Bible there is not an emphasis on saving or managing time. Yes, we are told about being good stewards of our time, but as we read in Ephesians 5 our challenge is to 'redeem' the time.

List to Ephesians 5:15-17 from the NKJV: See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, ¹⁶redeeming the time, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

The NIV says: Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is.

Have you been REDEEMING THE TIME, taking advantage of every opportunity that God sends your way?—a friend who wants to talk, the chance to lend a hand to someone in need, the privilege of influencing the life of a child by teaching Sunday school, the precious moments we share with our children at home?

Paul is challenging disciples of Jesus to recognize the impact that their life can have.

So Paul tells us to “Be very careful how we live.”

We need to live ‘wisely.’

We need to redeem the time. Taking advantage of every opportunity that God sends your way- a friend who wants to talk, the chance to lend a hand to someone in need, the privilege of influencing the life of a child.

What will be the impact of our life?

We all know that every day each of us has the same number of minutes to invest. While we may have been given different gifts, talents, and abilities; we all have the same number of minutes in which to impact others.

In the OMTL book the author said, God has given you enough time to do everything you need to do, both in your life and in your day. Note that God doesn’t give you enough time to do everything that others think you need to do. But if we are listening, seeking and obeying the leading of God; then our lives will make an impact in the minutes and hours God gives us.

The challenge we all face is portrayed in the closing moments of the movie, Saving Private Ryan. The movie revolves around the activities of D-Day and the eventual hunt for one soldier- Private Ryan-who gets to go home because his brothers all died in combat. When Private Ryan is finally found he is with a rag-tag bunch of soldiers holding a bridge. Not willing to leave these men, Ryan and the soldiers sent to find him stay to defend the bridge.

In the end, only a handful of soldiers survive the German attack. Private Ryan is one of those soldiers. With his dying breath, the Captain who led the search for Ryan tells him to 'earn it.' To make his life worth the sacrifice of those who died to bring him home safely.

Then the camera returns to the cemetery at Normandy where an old Private Ryan reflects on his life.

[Video]

One day, our time on earth will come to an end. And we will be asked to give an account of how we invested the gift of time that was given to us. We will not be asked how well we did in SAVING TIME. We will not be asked to prove how well we did in MANAGING TIME. We will be asked how well we did in REDEEMING THE TIME, in making the most of the opportunities that God sent our way.