

Growing Spiritually

Introduction

Luke 8:14 Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and **bring no fruit to maturity.**

- 1. In 1967, Charles Hummel wrote a book on time management for Christians and called it Tyranny of the Urgent — its point was that it is dangerous to let the “urgent” crowd the “important” out of our lives.**
- 2. Whatever problem our lives may present for others, the pace of life ought to be a critical concern for the Christian.**
- 3. If we become too busy to spend time in the activities God has designed for our personal spiritual growth, we are in serious jeopardy.**
- 4. What can we say about our need to take time for prayer, Bible study, and meditation on spiritual things?**

It Takes Time to Grow Spiritually

- 1. It takes “quantity” time as well as “quality” time to grow spiritually.**
- 2. At the very least, spiritual growth requires time to absorb God’s word:**

1 Peter 2:2 as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, **that you may grow thereby,**
- 3. This can hardly be done while “on the run” with many other things we occupy our time and effort with.**

Time Must Be Managed Well to Achieve Spiritual Growth

1. **Time and money are things over which we must exercise good stewardship — and sometimes we fail to do so.**
 - A. **When it comes to spiritual matters, there is a certain type of person who is generous with his money, but stingy with his time — he cannot “afford” the time it takes to pray, etc.**
 - B. **In fact, our generosity with money may be an effort to compensate for our lack of time spent with the Lord in private devotion.**
2. **As miserly as we can be with our time for spiritual growth, however, we can be “prodigal” in the use of it for anything else!**
 - A. **“Prodigal” = recklessly wasteful, extravagant. From Latin prodigere (“to squander”).**
 - B. **The Prodigal Son wasted what he had been given:
Luke 15:11-13**
3. **We may need to “reallocate our resources” in the use of our time.**

An Over Commitment to Activities

- 1. It may be that our problem is an over commitment to activities that compete with our devotional lives.**
 - 2. We spend much of our time under tremendous stress — and the reason is not hard to find.**
 - A. Stress is when your heart says “Don’ do it, your priorities will suffer” and your mouth says “Why sure, I’d be happy to do it.”**
 - B. Even with respect to “good deeds,” we can have so much “output” that there is not enough time for personal replenishment and spiritual growth.**
 - 2. How often do our children see us in quiet devotion unto God?**
 - 3. Not taking time for “maintenance” is always a risky, foolish thing — rarely is it possible to increase productivity by diminishing maintenance time.**
 - A. Yet we live as if we think we can go on indefinitely without spending time alone with God.**
 - B. Many of people are “running on empty” spiritually — and are accidents waiting to happen.**
 - 4. We are distracted by worry about many things:**
- Luke 10:41-42 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."
- 5. While we are “busy here and there,” our spiritual lives disappear.**

Jesus Is Our Perfect Example

1. In the matter of private devotion to our Heavenly Father, Jesus is our perfect example.

A. None of us come close to being as pressed for time as the Lord.

Mark 3:20 Then the multitude came together again, so that **they could not so much as eat bread**.

Mark 6:30-32 Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. And He said to them, "Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while." **For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat**. So they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves.

2. Yet Jesus made the necessary arrangements for time alone with the Father.

A. After the busy day on which He fed the five thousand, Jesus prayed most of the night.

Matthew 14:13-14, 22-25

Mark 1:35 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed **to a solitary place**; and there He prayed.

Luke 6:12 Now it came to pass in those days that He **went out to the mountain to pray**, and continued all night in prayer to God.

3. Apparently, this was Jesus' habit.

Luke 5:16 So He Himself often **withdrew into the wilderness** and prayed.

4. One can take the time it takes to commune with God.

We Must Spend Time Alone With God

- 1. We must learn to exercise the discipline necessary to spend the time we need alone with God.**
- 2. We can learn to distinguish between the urgent and the important — and devote adequate time to the latter.**
- 3. We can, among other things, spend less time watching television or allowing electronic devices to rule our time.**
 - A. These things can and often do rob us of spiritual vitality.**
- 4. We can heed the words of the song “Take Time to be Holy.”**
 - A. “Speak oft with thy Lord.”**
 - B. “Feed on His word.”**
 - C. “Spend much time in secret with Jesus alone.”**
 - D. “Be calm in thy soul.”**
- 5. We can build some “quiet spaces” somewhere in there among our many other activities.**

Conclusion

- 1. Our “progress” will not be “evident” if we do not meditate on spiritual matters and give ourselves entirely to them:**

1 Timothy 4:15 Meditate on these things; give yourself entirely to them, **that your progress may be evident to all.**

- 2. Significant time for spiritual growth must be more than a resolution we keep for a few days and then fall back into our old ways.**

- 3. We must do whatever it takes — before it is too late.**

- 4. We need, in all of this, to ask the Lord’s help:**

Luke 11:1 Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, "**Lord, teach us to pray,** as John also taught his disciples."

