

The Management Skills of the Christian

By Doug Hamilton

There are three areas of management that a Christian must take into consideration if we are ever going to thrive for the kingdom of God. They are to be good managers of time, money and people. The aim of this series is to discuss all three in detail and try to gain a better perspective on thriving in all three. It is not enough to know where we are to stand on these, but also have a plan to gain strength in those areas.

I. Managers of Time

A) Punctuality

- Matthew 25:1-13 “Then the kingdom of heaven will be comparable to ten virgins, who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom.² “Five of them were foolish, and five were prudent.³ “For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them,⁴ but the prudent took oil in flasks along with their lamps.⁵ “Now while the bridegroom was delaying, they all got drowsy and *began* to sleep.⁶ “But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet *him*.’⁷ “Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps.⁸ “The foolish said to the prudent, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’⁹ “But the prudent answered, ‘No, there will not be enough for us and you *too*; go instead to the dealers and buy *some* for yourselves.’¹⁰ “And while they were going away to make the purchase, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast; and the door was shut.¹¹ “Later the other virgins also came, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open up for us.’¹² “But he answered, ‘Truly I say to you, I do not know you.’¹³ “Be on the alert then, for you do not know the day nor the hour.
- The true meaning of the parable is to be prepared for the day that the Lord returns. This type of preparedness can encompass many different perspectives, but all are under the expectation of being prompt in their preparedness. Timing in decisions is everything.
- When a person is consistently running late, they inadvertently send the message of disorganization and inconsistency. This is because in the real world, people who demonstrate a failure to manage time typically will pay the price in the end.
 - Proverbs 12:24 The hand of the diligent will rule, But the slack hand will be put to forced labor.
 - Proverbs 21:5 The plans of the diligent lead surely to advantage, But everyone who is hasty comes surely to poverty.
- Another thing to consider concerning punctuality that should be emphasized is in the area of demonstrating our love and respect for one another. When we agree to meet at certain places for certain activities at certain times, it is imperative to have all three in alignment.
 - 1 Corinthians 14:26 states “...*when ye come together*...” indicating a planned time of corporate fellowship as agreed to within the local body of believers.
 - *1 Corinthians 14:40 But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner.* To consistently arrive late for reasons that are in your control demonstrates a lack of camaraderie for the moment that was agreed to. Eph 5:21 states we are to be “*Submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.*” This can be demonstrated punctuality.

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Tips to be more punctual:

- Try to view events in their entirety. They have a start, a middle and ending. When you show up late, you are missing part of the entire event, making it incomplete.
- Go to bed at a more reasonable time and awake earlier. *Mark 1:35 In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.*
- Do not plan to just be on time, but plan to be early. The extra time that you have can be used to fellowship with the others.

B) Productivity

- We all have the same amount of hours in a day in which to be productive for the Lord. It is with that concept in mind that Paul announces to the Colossians and Ephesians the following:
 - Colossians 4:5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. (ESV)
 - Ephesians 5:15-16 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, ¹⁶ making the most of your time, because the days are evil.
- We are expected to be productive for God with the time that He affords us on this planet. He saved us to be productive in the kingdom of His blessed Son Jesus Christ.
 - Matthew 5:13-16 “You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how can it be made salty *again*? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled under foot by men. ¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; ¹⁵ nor does *anyone* light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. ¹⁶ “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.
 - Matthew 13:23 “And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.”
 - James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of *our* God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, *and* to keep oneself unstained by the world.
- God knows every step of our life and also knows there is a human tendency to lean toward being unproductive.

Tips to be more productive:

- Plan your work, then work your plan!
- Plan more toward your strengths.
- Stop doing what is not working.
- Be inventive and willing to try new methods.
- Document It: Use a calendar, schedule book, sheet of paper for a list.
- Write a checklist and then cross the items off upon completion.
- Ask for help if needed.

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C) Perspective

Ecclesiastes 3:1 There is an appointed time for everything. And there is a time for every event under heaven. We must understand that we have a time-based perspective, not only from our point of view, but also the Lord.

1) Yesterday is the past.

- Luke 9:62 But Jesus said to him, “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.”
- Philippians 3:13 “..one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead...”

2) Life is short.

- Psalm 39:5 “Behold, You have made my days *as* handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Your sight; Surely every man at his best is a mere breath.
- James 4:14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are *just* a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away.
- Psalm 90:10 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is *but* labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away.
- For the ones whom are young, don’t get used to it. To the ones whom are middle-aged, the clock is ticking. To the ones whom are aged, you are running out of time.

3) Heaven is Eternal.

- 1 Timothy 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.
- Revelation 22:5 And there will no longer be *any* night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever.
- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of *the* archangel and with the trumpet of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. ¹⁷ Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall always be with the Lord.

4) Today is the Day!

- Hebrews 3:13 But encourage one another day after day, as long as it is *still* called “Today”...
- Matthew 6:34 “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.
- Psalm 33:11 The counsel of the LORD stands forever, The plans of His heart from generation to generation.

Tips to hold a correct perspective.

- Targeted prayer:
 - Confession of missed opportunities
 - Promise of present commitment.

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- Recognition of future hope in Christ
- Savor every moment.
- Review your goals regularly to make sure you are still on target.

D) Priorities

- Luke 14:16-20 But He said to him, “A man was giving a big dinner, and he invited many;¹⁷ and at the dinner hour he sent his slave to say to those who had been invited, ‘Come; for everything is ready now.’¹⁸ “But they all alike began to make excuses. The first one said to him, ‘I have bought a piece of land and I need to go out and look at it; please consider me excused.’¹⁹ “Another one said, ‘I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to try them out; please consider me excused.’²⁰ “Another one said, ‘I have married a wife, and for that reason I cannot come.’
- Jesus spoke this parable to illustrate the need to prioritize our time for God. He was inviting them to a feast, but they prioritized other circumstances ahead of what God was offering them.
- According to Stephen Covey, the author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, "the essence of effective time and life management is to organize and execute around priorities." In other words, the difficulty with time management is not that of discipline, but the failure to have the correct priorities deeply planted in the hearts and minds.
- When a person prioritizes with their time according to the values of God, things always work out in the end and in favor of the kingdom. That is the key, putting God first and us second.
 - Matthew 6:33 “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.
 - Proverbs 16:3 Commit your works to the LORD And your plans will be established.
 - John 3:30 “He must increase, but I must decrease.
 - Proverbs 3:6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight.

Some ways to ensure the priorities are correct.

Take three pieces of paper and write down three titles: “Must Do” List, “Should Do” List and “Nice to Do” List. Under each categorize in the following way. If your ultimate goal is to make sure you and your family members are in heaven, then the following applies.

1) “MUST DO” LIST

Write the things that **MUST** occur **TODAY** in order for that ultimate goal take place in the future.

- Spending time with spouse and children
- Going to worship with them
- Praying with them
- Studying the scriptures with them
- Living a moral life with them
- Providing for them.

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2) “SHOULD DO” LIST

This is a list of important things that **MUST** be done, but not necessarily today.

- Youth fellowship and camps
- Marriage classes and seminars
- Family visits to the sick, shut-ins and the lost
- Going to parent/teacher conference and other school activities
- Domestic or foreign missions

3) “NICE TO DO” LIST

These are the things that you neither must do today nor must do in the future, but would like to do if possible.

- Vacations
- Boat and motor
- Sporting Events
- Going to a movie

When these lists are completed, ask yourself how many from each list is being done. If more from the “Nice to Do” list are being carried out than from the “Must Do” and the “Should Do” lists, then your priorities are out of step and changes must be made.

In closing:

The Christian must possess time management skills if they are ever going to be the people of God that He has called us to be. This is inclusive to Punctuality, Productivity, Perspective and Priorities. If we will just take the Time to manage Time, God will bless us all the Time until the end of Time.