

## Weekly Prayer Strategy

4 - 11 March 2017

This week's prayer strategy is based on Paul Nyamuda's sermon, **Repositioning Your Use of Time (Part 3)**

### Prayer Point 1

- Pray for clarity with regards to your primary purpose
- Pray against doing second things first in your life. Pray that you keep first things first.
- Pray that God receives all the glory for all that you invest your time into.
- Pray that God reveals to you all the things that distract you from your primary purpose.

***God delights in using improbable people to do the impossible, with the beneficiaries being undeserving recipients, so that He gets the glory.*** (Adapted from Chip Ingram). It's your responsibility to know that thing. Ignorance of your purpose is no excuse at the judgment seat of Christ. Jesus desires to reveal your purpose to you if you desire to do it.

With this dream comes the gift of two wonderful resources, not just money, but TIME & ENERGY. So guard that time and energy.

Most Christians fail to do what God has called them to do because of fatigue. We are just too tired. So we should ask the question WHY? We end up too tired to fulfil our primary purpose because we are doing second things first instead of first things first. Those second things are not evil but they crowd out the primary thing. The primary thing in your life is left unfulfilled not because you spend too much time in drunken orgies, but for the average Christian its other weights; that's how tricky the enemy is. We often end up minimizing our dream and vision in God to do what is realistic within our crowded lives. Remember that often your primary purpose is a subset of what you are already doing.

God wants to function supernaturally through you. Being born again means you have divine life at work in you so this determined the type of exploits God wants to do through you. He wants to do miracles through you. **A miracle is something that's inexplicable but undeniable.**

**Now success is hidden in your daily routine.** Many people are gifted spiritually but they fail in life because their personal management is poor. What we are discussing today is a major differentiator between greatness and mediocrity. It's important to understand that time is a limited resource that you have to plan for. **When you set goals you are pre-deciding and declaring that "THIS is how I am going to allocate my time"**. Unfortunately for most people, they never accomplish their goals in life, because of the disconnect between their dreams and their use of time. So they remain in dreamland. Think about your primary purpose, how much time have you allocated to it? If not, then it won't happen. It will remain something illusive that you are hoping for one day.

**Luke 14:28-31, TLB. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand?"**

Planning is biblical and spiritual. Jesus here is could begiving advice to military generals and people in construction.

**Proverbs 21:5, NIV. "The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty."**

What are your plans? Do you have plans? Are you diligent?

Our planned use of time should always be submitted to God.

### **James 4:14-16**

**Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.<sup>15</sup> Instead, you ought to say, "If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that."<sup>16</sup> As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil.**

If my time is yielded to God and if I truly plan to glorify Him in my use of time, then I am guaranteed an attack on my use of time. This often comes in the form of timewasters. This is the opposite of redeeming the time. If the Lord says we must redeem the time then the enemy wants us to be in bondage to timewasters.

### **Pray Point 2**

- **Pray that God reveals to you your timewasters.**
- **Pray for the courage to guard against these timewasters.**
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### **I. What are some common time-wasters?**

This list was created by Dr. R. Alec Mackenzie from the responses of managers in 14 countries over 8 years. The vast majority of these managers were employed in corporate organisations.

Note the ones you need to work on. This Research has found that some top time-wasters are:

1. Telephone interruptions
2. Drop-in visitors
3. Meetings (both scheduled and unscheduled)
4. Crises
5. Lack of clear goals and supporting plans
6. Lack of objectives, priorities and deadlines
7. Cluttered desk and personal disorganisation
8. Ineffective delegation and involvement in routine and detailed administration/bureaucracy
9. Attempting too much at once and unrealistic time estimates
10. Confused responsibility and authority (scope creep)
11. Inadequate, inaccurate or delayed information
12. Indecision and procrastination
13. Inability to say "No"
14. Lack of controls, standards and progress reports
15. Fatigue
16. Lack of self discipline

### Typically time wasters can be divided into five key groups:

- 1 Lack of clear, focused goals and associated result-oriented plans
- 2 Lack of organization and personal management
- 3 Lack of self discipline (one of the effects, but also a cause of other effects)
- 4 Outside influences (We tend to blame only outside influences)

I want to highlight; **poor personal management skills**. The list below illustrates some time management challenges stemming from limited personal management skills. Note the ones that apply to you.

1. Scheduling less important work before more important work.
2. Starting a job before thinking it through.
3. Leaving jobs before they are completed.
4. Doing things that can be delegated to another person.
5. Doing things that can be delegated to modern equipment.
6. Doing things that actually aren't a part of your real job.
7. Keeping too many, too complicated, or overlapping records.
8. Handling too wide a variety of duties.
9. Failing to build barriers against interruptions.
10. Allowing conferences and discussions to wander.
11. Conducting unnecessary meetings, visits, and/or phone calls.
12. Chasing trivial data after the main facts are in.
13. Socializing at great length between tasks.

### **Activity**

Think about your own list of time wasters. Take a few moments now to create your own "time wasters" list. Think outside the box; for example a BIG one is WORRYING.

## **II. What are some practical ways to effectively manage time?**

### **A. Focus on the things that give you maximum results (high leverage activities).**

Steven Covey speaks of the sphere/circle of influence and sphere of concern. Our sphere of concern consists of all those things we are concerned about whilst our sphere of influence consists of those things we can shape. A lot of us spend far too much time worrying about things we cannot influence instead of investing our time (which is a limited resource) into those things we can influence. This model encourages us to grow our sphere of influence.

Focus your energy on those things you can change and your 'circle of influence' will grow.

Remember the Pareto Principle (80/20 Rule); 20% of our activities result in 80% of our productivity.

### **B. Prioritize the big rocks in your life.**

"Those who are to succeed give the majority of their time to their priority projects."

**What are the "big rocks" in your life – the things that really matter to you?**

**Do you block off time to invest each week for the "big rocks" in your life?**

**If you did this as a first step, could the "pebbles" and "sand" items still get completed during your week?**

**Robert J McKair** said, *“The reason most major goals are not achieved is that we spend too much of our time doing 2<sup>nd</sup> things first.”*

*When something comes first in your life you allocate time to it, you guard against being distracted from it and you train for it so that you can be your best at it.*

*Don't measure how effective your mothering is by the amount of time you spend with your kids, but more by what you pass on to them. You can spend time with someone but pass on insecurity and fear. When the fear of the Lord is present in your use of time you focus on giving the best of yourself in every moment because it's as worship unto God.*

**Jesus had some big rocks in His life and it's important that we follow His example.**

Luke 2:49: *“ I **must** be in my fathers house”*

○ *“The Son of Man **must** suffer”*

○ *“ **Must** do the works of Him who sent me”*

What are your **musts**? Are they on your timetable? If not how can you monitor your progress?

The reason I have done the books etc is because it is a strong conviction I have that the world need that information. It's not a nice to have, but an obligation.

### **Prayer Point 3**

- **Pray that God helps you to plan your week effectively.**
- **Pray that your timetable is aligned with your primary purpose and God-given goals.**
- **Pray that God helps you as you plan ahead that you would flow with His thoughts.**

### **C. Take time out to plan your daily routine and activities.**

Sadly many people just go with the flow and are proud of it.

**Proverbs 13:16, TLB. "A wise man thinks ahead; a fool doesn't and even brags about it!"**

The Oxford dictionary defines planning as *“Arranging or working out **details** before hand.”* Time management consists of certain details. This weeks for planning meals etc.

Some quotes on the power of planning:

*“Those who do not plan their time have decided that time; events and circumstances will rule them.”*

*“Those who plan their time and keep to it succeed.”*

*“To tell who a man's God is, see whose appointments he keeps faithfully.”*

*“Anything that is not put on a timetable is a thing that you have decided does not need to happen.”*

**Set time aside weekly to plan the next number of days.**

#### **D. Create To-Do Lists.**

1. Your lists should define the time required for each activity.

When creating these lists, remember Parkinson's Law: work expands to fill the time allotted to it.

2. List activities in order of priority.

Remember our human tendency is to focus on the urgent at the exclusion of the important. Are there important things you are neglecting because of the urgent? What is the consequence of this if you carry on for the next five years?

3. In your list highlight both the process and the result you want to achieve.

Focusing only on results might not make the quantity of work-load clear.

4. Check off completed activities.

Human beings are goal-oriented. You will recognize your progress and feel productive.

5. Include appointments with yourself in your diary or to-do list.

Often we disrespect our values and priorities by only valuing activities which have to do with other people. However, having some quiet time is an important activity to schedule into your daily routine.

6. By the end of the day create a new list including what you have not been able to do.

#### **Prayer Point 4**

- **Pray that God shows you what to include in your STOP TO Do list.**
- **Pray that God helps you with inner time management where you will do things at the right time of day to maximize your efficiency.**
- **Pray for the courage to say NO to distractions.**
- **Pray for wisdom to create systems that help you with your time management as stated in this section.**

#### **E. Develop Stop-To-Do Lists.**

Often we fail to accomplish our mission because we have been distracted by many things (which are often good things in themselves). Stop-To-Do Lists include things which we simply have to stop doing in order to accomplish our mission.

#### **F. Conduct a body inventory.**

Are you sleeping well/eating/energy levels?

Are you being honest with people and exercising healthy boundaries? If not, it might be highlighting that you are not emotionally healthy.

#### **G. Practice the art of delegation.**

Are you a "control freak" who struggles to delegate?

#### **H. Manage telephone calls effectively.**

1. Determine the best time of day for calls. Set aside specific times when you can receive calls.
2. Prepare information in advance.
3. Manage length of calls.

#### **I. Combine related meetings where possible.**

We often find ourselves engaging in a series of one-on-one meetings discussing the same thing largely due to lack of planning for a combination of these meetings.

#### **J. Overcome procrastination.**

### **III. What is the nature of procrastination?**

*Procrastination is deferring action; putting off or delaying, especially something requiring immediate attention.*

#### **Luke 9:58-62**

And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air *have* nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head." [59](#)And He said to another, "Follow Me." But he said, "Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father." [60](#)But He said to him, "Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God." [61](#)Another also said, "I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home." [62](#)But Jesus said to him, "No one, after putting his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."

Jesus sees procrastination on the things of God as a sign that you are unfit for the kingdom.

#### **Luke 14:15-24**

[16](#)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.' [21](#)"And the slave came *back* and reported this to his master. Then the head of the household became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out at once into the streets and lanes of the city and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.' [22](#)"And the slave said, 'Master, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' [23](#)"And the master said to the slave, 'Go out into the highways and along the hedges, and compel *them* to come in, so that my house may be filled. [24](#)'For I tell you, none of those men who were invited shall taste of my dinner.'"

When you procrastinate you are making excuses for not doing it now. It's interesting to note that it was not an outright no from them but rather plausible reasons why they were not available. But there was a deeper heart issues going on. When we procrastinate we often have an excuse that's not the real heart reason.

What are you procrastinating (deferring action to a future date)? How does God see it? Could it be that your procrastination will result in others taking your place? It says that they shall not taste of the dinner.

It's been said that tomorrow is the busiest day of people's lives. There are a number of reasons why people procrastinate, ranging from perfectionism – waiting for that perfect time when you can do it perfectly or just sheer laziness. Regardless of the cause it is useful to embrace specific habits which help to destroy procrastination. Procrastination is often caused by:

- **Fear**

"Do not call conspiracy everything this people calls a conspiracy; do not fear what they fear, and do not dread it. Isaiah 8:12

NLT

"Don't call everything a conspiracy, like they do, and don't live in dread of what frightens them.

- **Indecisiveness**

*"A double minded man is unstable in all he does."* (James 1:8 LB)

- **Perfectionism**

Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.(Eccles 11:4)

NLT

Farmers who wait for perfect weather never plant. If they watch every cloud, they never harvest.

- **Resentment**

Your procrastination becomes a form of punishment toward the person you are angry with or resentful toward.

Surely resentment destroys the fool, and jealousy kills the simple. (Job 5:2).

If you remain resentful for a long time it can turn into a root of rebellion. In this state one makes inner vows like, "I will never do what they want me to do". OR "I will do it in my own time."

- **Difficult conversations**

When it's not easy to say upfront, "I disagree", the result is often procrastination.

- **Incorrect priorities**

Putting second things first. When you procrastinate it doesn't mean you are inactive. You usually end up busy with an alternative.

**Here are some powerful examples of a bias toward action in scripture:**

**Acts 10:32- 33,**

**Therefore send to Joppa for Simon, who is called Peter. He is a guest in the home of Simon the tanner, by the sea.' 33So I sent for you immediately, and you were kind enough to come. Now then, we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord" has instructed you to tell us.**

**Acts 16: 32 – 34**

**Then Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him and to everyone in his house. 33At that hour of the night, the jailer took them and washed their wounds. And without delay, he and all his household were baptized. 34Then he brought them into his home and set a meal before them. So he and all his household rejoiced that they had come to believe in God....**

### Prayer Point 5

- Pray that you would see procrastination for what it is. Pray for honesty around the causes of procrastination in your life.
- Repent of the root cause of your procrastination.
- Pray that God helps you in developing strategies to overcome procrastination as stated below.

### IV. How do we overcome procrastination?

1. Repent of the root
2. Give yourself deadlines.
  - a. Remember that moderate pressure motivates while extreme pressure debilitates.
3. **EAT THAT FROG. Don't avoid difficult problems or situations.**
  - a. Sometimes it's better to deal with them first so that you can look forward to the easier ones.
4. Break up the large "mountains" into small manageable hills.
5. Beware of perfectionism.
  - a. Just get started, you can always refine things later.
6. Remember that there is no perfect time to start.
  - a. Writers know that you write a book one page at a time and instead of waiting for the perfect time it's often best to just start.
7. Be honest with yourself about how you view the task.
  - a. Often people will procrastinate in a passive-aggressive manner because they are actually opposed to the activity but too afraid to face it.
8. Develop systems to help you to avoid procrastination.
  - You can set times or deadlines for responding to emails (E.g. within 12 hours or having a set time each day for responding to emails).
  - Don't pick up paperwork more than once but make a decision the first time you see it.