

## *Week Six*

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# How Can I Make Time for God and His Word?

During our time together we've looked at the *Who?*, *What?*, *When?*, *Where?*, and *Why?* of Bible reading. Today we're going to look at a specific *How?*: *How can I make time for God and His Word?*

The question is similar to the question of *When?* that we looked at a couple of weeks back, but our focus today is more on establishing priorities. In a sense we're not only circling back around to the *When?* question of week three, we're also revisiting the heart issues of week one.

Everyone knows that people make time for what is important to them. When opportunities conflict, one wins and the other loses. The one that wins has priority. This week let's examine some verses that give us practical help in definitively choosing God, His Word, and His ways as our priority.

## DEEP . . .

### *Context:*

Hebrews 12:1-3 comes on the heels of what is commonly referred to as "the faith chapter." Hebrews 11 traces faith throughout the ages while giving a pretty sweet *CliffsNotes* version of the Bible at the same time. Hebrews 11 and 12 tie together in the "Therefore" at the beginning of Hebrews 12.

### *Scripture:*

**READ** Hebrews 12:1-3

- 1 *Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,*
- 2 *fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*
- 3 *For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

## *Questions:*

What call to action does the author of Hebrews make at the end of Hebrews 12:1?

How does he say we should go about that? What will it involve?

What is the difference between an encumbrance and a sin?

How many encumbrances are we to lay aside?

What are some encumbrances in your life? (Don't gloss over this one.)

How do they slow you down in the race set before you?

What steps can you take this week to throw them off?

What else does the author of Hebrews call us to do at the beginning of Hebrews 12:2?

Looking at all three verses, what obstacles face the runner? Which do you struggle with the most?

What steps can you take to overcome these obstacles this week?

## **GOING DEEPER**

If you have some extra time this week, read through Hebrews 11 and consider some of the ways the heroes of faith threw off their encumbrances and sins that entangled them.

### *Context:*

In Matthew 13 Jesus tells various parables of the kingdom of heaven.

### *Scripture:*

**READ** Matthew 13:44-46

- 44 *“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*
- 45 *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls,*
- 46 *and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

### *Questions:*

What does Jesus compare the kingdom of heaven to in verse 44? In verse 45?

In each story, what does the person part with in favor of the kingdom?

What is the attitude of each person? What does this say about their priorities?

If someone were observing your life, what would they say is your pearl? What is your life most profoundly invested in?

Do you need to make a priority shift? If so, what and how?

## GOING DEEPER

If you have enough time this week, read the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5–7 and summarize Jesus' words for Jesus' people.

### *Context:*

Matthew 6:24-34 is from a portion of Jesus' teaching typically referred to as the Sermon on the Mount—an extended segment of teaching where Jesus paints the picture of how to live as His disciple.

## Scripture:

**READ** Matthew 6:24-34

- 24 *"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.*
- 25 *"For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"*
- 26 *"Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?"*
- 27 *"And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?"*
- 28 *"And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,*
- 29 *yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.*
- 30 *"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!"*
- 31 *"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?'"*
- 32 *"For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.*
- 33 *"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*
- 34 *"So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

## Questions:

How many masters can a person have? Why?

How is worry incompatible with having God as Master?

What does Jesus tell us to do instead of worrying? What alternate action are we to take?

According to Jesus what do the Gentiles eagerly seek?

What does He tell His people to seek?

What are you seeking today? Where are your priorities?

## WIDE . . .

This week is the beginning of truly reading on your own, so pick a book and go at it! Better yet, do that and invite a friend along for the ride. A little accountability can go a long ways in staying in the Word. I hope you'll invest in reading through the Bible time and again for the rest of your life. Remember, book by book and log it as you go in your table of contents. When you finish, erase your checkmarks and start afresh!

If you find yourself discouraged from time to time along your Bible reading path, always remember the words of 2 Chronicles 16:9a . . .

*“ . . . the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.”*

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