

Probably the most frequently asked question I get when preaching out of town:

**“Why are we losing so many of our young people?”** Well, there are many answers suggested:

- teenagers and young adults get caught up with worldly friends and are led away
- they date ungodly people and marry non-Christians and are drawn away
- immoral activity, drug abuse, worldliness has allured their sight

And we do see that. We see young Christians overtaken by the passing pleasures of sin.

But more commonly, it isn't the big sin, but the SLOW FADE...

When young Christians fail to learn the simplest of skills: **MAKING TIME FOR GOD.**

Well, what is your defense? I mean, we can't stop these events from happening.

How can we keep God in the middle of our increasingly busy lives???

**Worth Noting** – This is not a “youth problem.” In fact, I would go so far to say that youth who fail to make time for God are likely just following in the footsteps of parents who don't make time for God. This is a family issue.

I want to give you a few practical points that can help, but first, we have to make a stand!

**Ephesians 5:15-17** – *I will not blindly follow the worldly walk of the world, which slowly but steadily leads away from God. I will make BETTER usage of my time. I will (not find) but MAKE time for God.*

*I will not be a fool, but wise, in that I will take the time to consider what God wants, what God deserves.*

-- Who is with me? Who wants to give God more of your life and give Jesus the place in my life He rightly deserves: **“First Place in Everything!” (Col. 1:18)**

### I. **Make Worship Non-Negotiable**

- a. I will not compromise. I will let nothing take this time from me. I will worship.
- b. Now, 4 hours of worship per week (Sun/Wed) does not a Christian make, and God certainly deserves a bigger piece of the pie than that, but what a place to start!
- c. **Eph. 5:17-21** – All of the good usage of time listed here are accom. in WORSHIP!
  - i. *Understand what the will of the Lord is*
  - ii. *Be filled with (influenced by) the Holy Spirit*
  - iii. *Speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs*
  - iv. *Giving thanks to God / And reverently subject to Jesus!*
- d. **Heb. 10:22-25** – Is not about “don't miss worship” but “who would miss this?” – this is time for God and God's people that is important and ... Non-Negotiable!
- e. Extra Activities, Summer Jobs, Career Path, Class Schedules – all important, all fall BEHIND the 3 services I have committed to God!
- f. Not saying SIN to miss worship for work, but even adults would amen this point!

-- Our Second Tip Reflects that we want to create MORE opportunities for God than 3 Weekly Assemblies --

### II. **Put God on your Schedule**

- a. We all have very busy, event filled lives, so most of us use calendars to keep things organized
  - i. iCAL for iphone or imac, PC Calendar, Google Calendar –
    1. great things like VACATIONS and BALLGAMES
    2. not so fun things like ORTHO APPT, or SAT exam
- b. If it matters, if it is important, if I can't forget it: it gets PLANNED, NOTED and MARKED
  - i. There may be other somewhat important things going on, but if forgotten: no big deal
- c. What about Time for God? What about the importance of fitting him in the WEEK?
  - i. *If we just hope that Bible Study or Godly service will happen, it won't – no time.*
- d. **Luke 12:15-19** – Jesus is addressing worldliness and greed here, but look at the illustration he builds. This guy is a planner, and a good one.
- e. Let's take some of that energy, which shows where our heart is, and schedule time for God
  - i. *Put Gospel Meetings, Youth Weekends, Singing, or similar events on your calendars*
  - ii. *If your church has a group study or youth study, get that down and planned for.*
  - iii. *Bible Reading Schedules – software or fridge copy, marking boxes each week.*
  - iv. *Family Study Time – Tue/Thu 7pm – everybody knows it.*
- f. Plan your life in layers of importance --- start with God and make everything else fit around Him

Well, maybe you've tried to give God more importance and time and it hasn't held: this next point is for you...

### III. Build Cords of Two or More

- a. What do cords have to do with closeness to God? Well, maybe a lot more than you think
- b. **Eccl. 4:9-12** – The idea is pretty simple: there are some things you may not be able to do on your own, but TWO is stronger than one (horse pulls 2500lb, two horses pull 12,500lb!)
  - i. And three, well, a cord of 3 is not easily broken.
  - ii. This passage is about the power of partnerships, teamwork, doing great things together!
  - iii. We will be much more successful when we have others working with us, supporting.
- c. We sometimes call these "accountability partners." Someone to answer to sure, but someone to be responsible to, where your success is their success
- d. Example) **Reading Program!** – How many of us have started these and not finished
- e. Example) **Girl wanting to sit with Older Members** – Great idea but not likely to be remembered. Until she got with two others, and they would remind, do it together!
- f. Example) **Hospitality** – Two families alternating homes and scheduling it together!
- g. So TODAY, pick an area of your life where God will get more time. Where you will start something for Him, for His people, that you want to stick with ... AND.. find some friends to do it with you. Set up matching schedules, get out calendars together, pick each other up, succeed!

"Okay," someone says, "These are all great ideas but I really don't have the time!" Alright, consider this:

### IV. Trim the Electro-Fat

- a. No this is not some diet that will give you more energy. But it may be a diet that will give you more time. Whether worship service, bible reading, visiting or hosting or teaching classes, folks are quick to say: I just don't have the time. That may be true, but where is all that time going?
- b. I know there are some vital things in life that demand our time, though we should put God first.
- c. But there is often a whole lot of little electro-fats that end up taking huge chunks out of our lives
  - i. Watching favorite tv shows – National Avg: 35hr per week! **That's a TON of time!**
  - ii. Video Games – Nat. Avg – 8<sup>th</sup> grade boys: 23hr!; girls 16hr; college: girls 6, boys 16.
  - iii. S.M. / Online – Kids: 50 hours per week online ... **Build dozens of cards for folks**
  - iv. Texting and Calls– Another 16 hours per week! **Do your Bible class lessons for a year!**
- d. KJV on **Eph. 5** says, "Redeem the Time" which means "Rescue from Loss!" I think we've got a lot of weekly time that needs to be rescued from loss, don't you?
  - i. The problem is we don't think of this time as choosing tech over God, we just go with the tech and complain we wish we had more time for God. Let's think differently about that!
- e. **Daniel 6:10-11** – What does Daniel's story have to do with trimming TV time? Maybe a lot!
  - i. When forced to choose between Time For God or His Life, Daniel chose Time for God.
  - ii. Small changes in these areas could give you a solid hour for God per day – SCHEDULE!

But among all of these, there is one tried and true tactic for Giving God the Attention He Deserves, Guaranteed

### V. Make your Miracle Morning

- a. Making time for God is important, critical even, but in our culture, it is NOT EASY. We are going to need to start early, to "wake the dawn with praises!" *SONG (I will wake the dawn with praises)*
- b. **Psalms 108:1-3** – In the palace, early morning.... But also...
- c. **Psalms 57:7-8** – Same thing... BUT... Where is David when he writes this?
  1. In a cave, running for his life, fleeing Saul... even here he fills the cave with song!
- d. Miracle Morning – Hal Elrod – start 1 hour before anything else – modified:
  - i. Pray, journal, read, journal, Pray --- every morning!

**Conclusion:** Perhaps some of the things we have shared will help you PLACE or KEEP God in the center of your LIFE by keeping Him in the center of your DAY, or maybe you can make a list of helpful tips on your own

But no matter HOW you do it ... DO it. Do it now. Today. Make those changes. Give him your time, your life. Because, (**Eph. 5:16**) – "The Days are Evil." Your life is short, uncertain, and passes so quickly.