

Time

We each have a measure of faith.
We each have an allotted measure of time.

What will we do with our lives—our time? Here we are presented with another choice, actually multiple choices present themselves everyday. Will we procrastinate? Do we know what we should be doing but make excuses? Will we seize the opportunities as they come up? Does our time belong to us?

Who doesn't know that life includes for each of us a measure of faith and an allotment of time? Paul refers to this measure of faith in Romans 12:3. In Psalm 90:12 Moses prays, **So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.** (KJV)

How much time do we have?—God knows.

How many of us, particularly older adults, have said, "I wish I had known then what I know now; things would have been different." From years ago part of a song, *Why Me*, by Kris Kristofferson:

Lord, help me Jesus, I've wasted it
So help me Jesus, I know what I am....

Try me Lord, if You think there's a way
I can try to repay
All I've taken from You
Maybe Lord, I can show someone else
What I've been through myself
On my way back to You

As Paige often says that God doesn't waste anything, and as Mr. Kristofferson realized—his testimony could be a help to others. It is never too late!

God doesn't waste anything. We do! Mostly, we waste opportunities for eternal purposes.

For many of us there was a time when we lived in the world without Godly fear. Psalm 94:7 talks about men that didn't think God saw what they were doing, **They say, "The Lord doesn't see it. The God of Jacob doesn't pay attention."** (CSB) Annette brought this out in conversation one day, saying that there wasn't any fear of God, indicating the reason for so much evil in the world. We know it's true. People think they get away with theft, hit-and-run, murder and so much wickedness. God sees. There is value in Godly fear. The fear of the Lord is *"the beginning of wisdom."* We have to start somewhere. *"The fear of the Lord prolongs life," "In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence and his children have a refuge. The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, turning people away from the snares of death."* (From Proverbs 9:10, 10:27, 14:26) Proverb 8:13 says, *"to fear the Lord is to hate evil."* These are just a few of many references to Godly fear.



There is one somebody who waits eagerly for his “opportune time,” as he did with Jesus after Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. He doesn’t miss his opportunities. These may be your times of distractions, of weakness, or even of success or victory in the spiritual arena. Victory may be the biggest test as it can lead to pride, whereas, our other failures will tend to keep us humble.

As a crucible refines silver, and a smelter refines gold, so a person should refine his praise. (CSB)

The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but people are tested by their praise. (NIV)

These are two different aspects to Proverbs 27:21. Both are meaningful. The first indicates that we should be careful in our giving of praise that it doesn’t harm the person who is receiving it. This is praise from the giver’s perspective. The second aspect indicates the effect from the recipient’s perspective. We must be careful when we receive praise. A person who lacks humility might feed his pride on praise. A similar warning can be seen where Paul was writing to Timothy talking about who should be an overseer in the church, he said, **“He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.”** (1 Timothy 3:6 NIV) Praise might have the same effect. Be careful as you dish it out. It can be harmful. Be careful as you receive praise. Remember that God is the source of all of our giftedness—every gift in us or on us. The praise belongs to him. Praise should be for encouragement not pride.

Praise and honor belong to our God. We are just vessels. What are our motives? Doug spoke at length on motives several weeks ago. It would be beneficial to think on this again as our motives are critical. I know my own motives haven’t always been pure. I thank God for the Holy Spirit’s conviction. May the Holy Spirit show us how much we love the admiration of men so that we can set our hearts on the eternal reward as we redeem the time.

There is so much wisdom in Proverbs! It is in many ways parabolic.

I went by the field of a slacker and by the vineyard of one lacking sense. Thistles had come up everywhere, weeds covered the ground, and the stone wall was ruined.

I saw, and took it to heart; I looked, and received instruction:

a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the arms to rest, and your poverty will come like a robber, and your need, like a bandit.

(Proverbs 24:30-34 CSB)

Is there a better description of what happens when one procrastinates. Things need to be done—in season and out of season. There are consequences when we don’t take care of the things that need to be done. Please think on this passage as to how it applies to life spiritually.

If we know what needs to be done—what we should be doing, don’t wait for a more opportune time. “Seize the day!” Is something standing in the way of your spiritual growth? Are you waiting for a better time to deal with what you know should be done? Is something standing in the way of what the Lord has purposed for you? —“Let the dead bury the dead!” —“Go sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come follow Me!” Jesus doesn’t make us do anything. It is always a matter of choice.

Do we really want to hear, “Well done, good and faithful servant!”? Corrie Ten Boom advised us to hold everything loosely, to be quick to repent and quick to forgive. —Great advice!

But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end. As has just been said: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.” (Hebrews 3:13-15 NIV) This verse has been quoted as referring to not procrastinating to receive our salvation through what Christ has accomplished. The Holy Spirit draws us, and there is danger in not responding when He “speaks.” This isn’t only about eternal salvation. It is about rebellion. It is about obedience. You say you have faith. Faith is proven by our works. Do you really trust God?—enough to obey Him? It is easy to give out of abundance. Can you give sacrificially? —of your life—of your time? Do you trust Him enough? He is the source with “cattle on a thousand hills.” We pray for healing, knowing that we cannot heal anyone. He is the healer. When we give to the point of sacrifice, He sees! He is the provider and source. **“Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; then all these things (food, clothing, necessities) will be given to you!** (From Matthew 6:33) Do you believe this? (Not even a bird falls to the ground without His attention.)

So then, redeeming the time means *now*. It’s your life, or is it? It is really His if you once gave it to Him—if you once *from your heart* said, “Jesus is Lord!” Let Him be Lord. Let Him reign! In this way you will “give no place to the devil.”

Thank You, Lord, for the gift of Your Holy Spirit—Your life that equips, enables, and empowers us to be just what You would have us to be, doing just what You would have us to do, in faith and trust spending our allotted time wisely.