

# 24 HOURS:

## Part 3: Time Alone...with God

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A popular opinion today is that twenty-four hours doesn't seem to last as long as it used to. Jobs, family and other commitments may consume up to 20 hours per day. Even if we increase the time that we dedicate to getting things done, it seems that we achieve less and less. Our response is to believe that even the simplest tasks cannot be completed in just one day, and depleting our days of meaning.

But what if we could fill our days with meaning...enough that we could accomplish the impossible within one day? Many have speculated if this notion is truly possible, and if so, how it could impact our world.

Jesus has already shown us how in a 24 hour period, we can literally change the **world**, through living a life of **meaning**.

Jesus was able to attach meaning to each day through a daily commitment to:

- His **priorities** – passion, people and purpose
- His **investments** and the **return** He received from them.

Another aspect of Jesus' life of meaning was His commitment to spending **quality** time alone in the presence of **God**.

**Mark 1:32-37** "That evening, after the sun was down, they brought sick and evil-afflicted people to him, the whole city lined up at his door! He cured their sick bodies and tormented spirits. Because the demons knew his true identity, he didn't let them say a word. 35-37 While it was still night, way before dawn, he got up and went out to a secluded spot and prayed. Simon and those with him went looking for him. They found him and said, "Everybody's looking for you."

## Why Time Alone?

From the beginning of time, God desired an intimate **relationship** with humankind.

**Genesis 2:7-15** "Then the LORD God took dust from the ground and formed a man from it. He breathed the breath of life into the man's nose, and the man became a living person. 8 Then the LORD God planted a garden in the east, in a place called Eden, and put the man he had formed into it. 9 The LORD God caused every beautiful tree and every tree that was good for food to grow out of

the ground. In the middle of the garden, God put the tree that gives life and also the tree that gives the knowledge of good and evil. . . . 15 The LORD God put the man in the garden of Eden to care for it and work it.

Within God's desire for an intimate personal relationship with Him was the provision of the most **ideal** conditions:

- a peaceful **carefree** setting
- an **absence** of distractions
- his **physical** presence

When sin entered the world, humankind could no longer **enjoy** the ideal conditions that God provided to commune with Him.

As a result, in order to encounter God personally, we need to commit to **seeking** the ideal conditions to fellowship with Him.

The good news is that God **honors** our efforts to seek Him.

**Jeremiah 29:12-14** "When you call on me, when you come and pray to me, I'll listen. 13-14 "When you come looking for me, you'll find me. "Yes, when you get serious about finding me and want it more than anything else, I'll make sure you won't be disappointed."

Jesus made the same commitment to **maintain** His intimate relationship with God.

## **Making the Time**

The greatest enemy of personal time management: **interruptions**.

A popular remedy to the things that throw us off schedule is to **avoid** the interruptions at all costs.

Frequently within the course of His day, Jesus encountered **spontaneous**, unexpected, time **consuming** events.

**Mark 1:32-34** "That evening, after the sun was down, they brought sick and evil-afflicted people to him, the whole city lined up at his door! He cured their sick bodies and tormented spirits. Because the demons knew his true identity, he didn't let them say a word"

Being faithful to His commitment to daily time with God demanded that Jesus exercise some **flexibility** as to when and where it occurred.

**Mark 1:35** "While it was still night, way before dawn, he got up and went out to a secluded spot and prayed".

Jesus' prayer discipline allowed Him to specifically:

- make major **decisions**.

**Luke 6:12-13** "At about that same time he climbed a mountain to pray. He was there all night in prayer before God. The next day he summoned his disciples; from them he selected twelve he designated as apostles..."

- offer **thanks to God**.

**Luke 10:21** "At that same time Jesus was filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit, and he said, "O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, thank you for hiding these things from those who think themselves wise and clever, and for revealing them to the childlike. Yes, Father, it pleased you to do it this way."

- **surrender to God's Will**.

**Matthew 26:39** He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine."

- **forgive those who wronged Him**.

**Luke 23:34** Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing."

- **pray for others (intercession)**

**John 17:6-9** "I spelled out your character in detail to the men and women you gave me. They were yours in the first place; then you gave them to me, and they have now done what you said. They know now, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that everything you gave me is firsthand from you, for the message you gave me, I gave them; and they took it, and were convinced that I came from you. They believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I'm not praying for the God-rejecting world but for those you gave me, for they are yours by right."

Making time with God a priority was **vital** to Jesus' earthly ministry.

## Making It Work

The primary barrier to spending time alone with God is we make it too **complicated**.

The Bible provides some easy steps:

1. Find a **solitary** place.

**Matthew 6:6** "Here's what I want you to do: Find a quiet, secluded place so you won't be tempted to role-play before God. Just be there as simply and honestly as you can manage. The focus will shift from you to God, and you will begin to sense his grace."

2. Prepare to **meet** God.

**Psalm 46:10** "Be still, and know that I am God!  
I will be honored by every nation.  
I will be honored throughout the world."

3. Absorb God's **thoughts**.

**1 Corinthians 2:16** "Who can know the LORD's thoughts? Who knows enough to teach him?" But we understand these things, for we have the mind of Christ.

**Psalm 119:105** "Your word is a lamp to guide my feet and a light for my path."

4. **Listen** to what God has to **say**.

**Isaiah 40:28-31**

28 Have you never heard or understood? Don't you know that the LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of all the earth? He never grows faint or weary. No one can measure the depths of his understanding. 29 He gives power to those who are tired and worn out; he offers strength to the weak. 30 Even youths will become exhausted, and young men will give up. 31 But those who wait on the LORD will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint.

## *The Turning Point . . .*

The foundation of a commitment to living a life of meaning is shaped by our **willingness** to spending quality time **alone** with God.

Each day of our lives that we dedicate to spending quality time alone with God increases our knowledge of **Him** and His **Will**.

*God's acquaintance is not made hurriedly. He does not bestow His gifts on the casual or hasty comer and goer. To be much alone with God is the secret of knowing Him and of influence with Him*

E.M. Bounds