



Lent Day 23, March 15, 2012 Redeeming the Time

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, Ephesians 5:15-18

In our study this week of simplicity, we need to consider what our schedules look like. In order to be able to grow in our faith, we have to have some time to dedicate to study and prayer and service. So, we need to ask the questions:

Am I using my time in the way God would want me to?

Do I have any margin in my life?

When my children were growing up, we had a rule at our house concerning their, and consequently my husband's and my, schedules. Outside of school, our children were allowed to be in youth group and then one other activity. For many years, my daughter chose piano, and my son chose soccer. My husband and I also decided not to allow our son to be on the travel team. We couldn't believe the amount of time that travel soccer teams demanded out of the weekend. That was something we just weren't willing to do.

Today both of our children are grown, so we no longer have the consideration of their schedules, but what has surprised me is the variety of things clamoring to take up my time. I have found that there's an ever-growing list of worthy things that I could spend all my time on, and very easily fall into the trap of over-scheduling myself. The above verses in Ephesians give me pause. God wants me to "redeem my time" and "understand what the will of the Lord is." To me this means that I need to spend some time seeking God for how He wants me to spend my time.

One of the meanings of the word *redeem* is interesting. In Greek the word is *exagorazo*, which means "by payment of a price to recover from the power of another, to ransom, buy off." This makes me think. God wants us to recover our time from the power of another, so that it counts for something. Might that "power of another" be the enemy, who would like nothing better than to see us so busy with things that we don't have time to devote to God? Or maybe we are serving Christ, but we are doing it in so many areas that we are spread too thin and are ineffective because we're 1) not where God wants us to be and 2) operating in our own power and not through the power of the Spirit.

Application: Today spend some time in prayer, praying through your schedule. Has God been trying to get your attention that you are overcommitted and ineffective? Or maybe you have the opposite problem. Perhaps God is calling you to a certain ministry,

but you are putting Him off. Either way, we need to find the balance where we are effectively serving Jesus in ministry, but still have time in our schedules for Bible study, prayer, growth, and family time.

1. Are there things in your schedule that you need to drop? Write down what thing or things you need to drop so that you can redeem your time.
2. Are there things you need to add in that God is calling you to spend your time on? Write these down.
3. Is there a book you have been meaning to read to encourage you in your faith? How about a specific Bible study or devotional? At what time of the day can you schedule some prayer time? Write these things down.

Prayer: Lord,

I need your perspective on my schedule. Show me the things I am doing that you haven't called me to do that need to go. Please make clear to me the areas in which I should be serving. And help me to leave some margin in my life so that I have time to spend with you. Amen.