

The Use of Time.

by J.R. Miller

Learning to use our time wisely is essential to living a full and meaningful life.

Scripture: Ephesians 5:15

Topics: "Time Management", "Value of Time"

Description

J.R. Miller emphasizes the critical importance of valuing time, comparing the squandering of minutes and hours to throwing away precious gold and gems. He argues that if we truly understood the worth of time, we would never waste a moment, as even small fragments of time can be filled with meaningful activities that enrich our lives and the lives of others. Miller encourages the audience to use their time wisely, engaging in productive rest, reading, and acts of kindness, rather than succumbing to idleness or unworthy pursuits. He highlights that every moment spent in service or love is never wasted, and that the habits formed in youth regarding time management will shape our entire lives. Ultimately, he calls for a conscious effort to redeem time and make it a bearer of blessings.

Transcript

If you saw a man standing by the shore, and flinging gold coins and diamonds into the sea -- you would say he was insane. Yet God sees many people continually doing something very like this. Not gold and precious stones, do they this throw away -- but minutes, hours, days, weeks, and years of time -- possessions which are of greater worth than any coins and gems of earth!

If we knew the intrinsic value of time to us, we would not allow a moment of it ever to be wasted. It is said that in the mints, where gold money is coined, that the sweepings of the floors are gathered and passed through the fire, and that in the course of a year large amounts of gold are saved from the mere dust of the precious metal which flies from it as it passes through the various processes of minting. In the same way, what vast values would be saved if there were some way of gathering up all the little fragments of the days and hours, the golden dust of time, which people let drop amid the wastes!

Then think how much most of us would really add to the length of our life, if we had learned to use every hour and moment. We talk seriously of the brevity of life. We are often heard complaining about the shortness of the days, wishing they had many more hours in them. Probably the majority of people waste one-half of their time, and have made only one-half as much of their life as they might have done -- if they had only used their time with wise economy, and had not squandered any of it.

There are many ways in which time is wasted. There is a great deal more resting than is necessary. There is an impression that a few hours' work, gives one a right to rest all the other hours of the twenty-four. Every one must rest. There are divine ordinances which call us to rest. We spend about one-third of our time in sleep. Sleep is necessary; the hours given to it are not wasted, although some sleep more than is necessary. God gives blessings to his beloved in sleep -- blessings of renewal of strength, the refilling of the exhausted fountains of life.

Then, time must be given to eating, to physical exercise, to home fellowships, to friendships, to religious services, private and public, and to reading and study. But time thus used, is not lost or wasted. This resting is as much a part of our real living, as actual work is.

Yet there are many people who fail to get the most from their hours of recreation. The best rest is not absolute idleness; but occupation that calls into play a class of faculties which are not active in one's ordinary work. There are those who, after busy days in some trade or business or other calling, find several hours every evening for reading good books. Thus they add continually to the quality of their life, keeping in exercise a very important part of their nature, enriching their character, and preparing themselves for larger influence and greater usefulness.

There are many ways of wasting time. Many really busy people waste a great deal of time in little fragments -- five minutes here, ten minutes there, half an hour today, and an hour tomorrow. Those who understand the true value of time, and have learned the secret of using it, always have something worth while to fill up all the little interstices. They have a book to read when they find a few minutes to spare before a meal is ready; or when waiting for one on whom they have called to appear, in the railway station waiting for the train, or on any occasion of delay.

Time is also well spent, in which we get a beautiful thought, an important fact or a suggestion of a lesson into our mind.

Or the fragments of time may be filled with little acts of helpfulness or kindness. You are traveling. You cannot read all the time. But there are people traveling with you to whom perhaps you may properly introduce yourself. You may lay down your book for a little quiet talk with a fellow-passenger. There are lives which carry ever afterward the memory and the influence of little talks with strangers on a railway train or in a stage-coach or on a steamer. If one's heart be full of the love of Christ, there is no limit to the blessing one may be in this way. Thus the moments, instead of being wasted in idle dreaming, may be given something to keep, which they will bring back at judgment day multiplied a thousand-fold.

A writer tells of an English nobleman, who, when he went over his estate, always carried acorns in his pocket; and when he found a bare spot, he would plant one of them. By and by there would be a tree growing on the place, adorning it. So we may plant on every empty space of time, a seed of something beautiful, which will not only be an adornment -- but will prove a blessing to others. It is one of the finest secrets of life, to know how to redeem the minutes from waste, and to make them bearers of blessing, of cheer, of encouragement, of good, to others.

No time given to service of love is wasted, even though nothing seems to come of it. Some people are discouraged in their efforts to do good, because so much of their kindness seems to be in vain. But no good deed or word is really lost. Sometime, somewhere, the blessing will appear. If the one you sought to help is not helped, some other one may be instead. Then the whole world is sweeter, because of every kindness done or good word spoken.

Much time is wasted in useless occupation, in doing things which are not worth while. No sin is worth while -- rather, it is the sowing of a curse, not only in the world -- but also in the heart of him who does the sinful thing. Time spent in sin is far worse than wasted. Then, there are other things which are not regarded as sins -- but which are of no value to anyone, and bring no benefit to him who spends his time in doing them. There is a great deal of reading that is not worth while. You go through book after book, and from all the pages get not one enriching thought, one helpful inspiration, one suggestion of beauty, one impulse toward a better life. All you have at the end of a year of such reading is only a confused memory of exciting sensations, unwholesome incidents, and unreal experiences. You would better have spent the time in sleep or in sheer idleness, than in going through such worthless books.

There is altogether too much of such reading done. There are good novels, great works of fiction, which teach splendid lessons, which show magnificent character and noble conduct, which inspire their readers to truer, better living. But there are novels which give unworthy and unwholesome thoughts of life, which leave in the mind of readers a residuum of unholy thoughts, false ideals, the trail of the serpent. Then there are novels which, if they are not positively evil in their spirit and tendency -- are inane, senseless, with nothing in them to make any one truer, braver, or sweeter-spirited.

A great deal of the popular reading of our day is but a waste of time, if not worse. If instead of it people would read only that which is worth while, how much richer they would be at the end of their life!

These are only suggestions of ways of using and wasting time. No problem that comes before us is more important than this -- what to do with time. It is a young people's problem, too; because in youth, if ever, we learn how to live. The habits we form then, will go with us to the end of our days. If we learn then the value of moments, and form the habit of giving every minute something worthy to keep -- we shall have found the secret of living in our sixty years -- fully a hundred years of such life as most people live.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jr-miller/the-use-of-time/>

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