

# REDEEMING THE TIME



BY PASTOR J. PAUL RENO

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All Scripture quotations in this book are taken  
from the *King James Version* of the Bible.

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## **REDEEMING THE TIME**

**Colossians 4:5**, *“Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.”*

**Ephesians 5:15, 16**, *“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”*

These verses do not pose options, but rather, are clear commands. Either we will obey – or disobey – them. Christian literature usually avoids the issue of how we use our time, or else it treats it unBiblically. Most people feel that there just is not enough time in a day to get things done. God never gives us something to do that He does not also provide the time in which to do it. We all have the same amount of time in a day. Our problem lies in how we use the time that we have.

As we have seen, time usage is a very Biblical issue. Colossians tells us that we can redeem the time by speaking to those who are not saved



(“*them that are without*”). Ephesians tells us that it is urgent for us to redeem the time “*because the days are evil.*” If the days were evil during Paul’s time, they are at least as evil today. The more evil the day is, the more important the problem of time usage becomes. During times of revival, people worked their jobs, got things done, and still had sufficient time for the things of God.

Four problems which increase as evil increases in our day are:

1. proper use of time,
2. inefficient use of time (fighting evil keeps us from “producing”),
3. confusion, and thus loss of time, and
4. solving our time problems.

Ephesians states that we need to redeem the time BECAUSE the days are evil. If we see the evil of the day, then we are under obligation to redeem the time. Colossians shows us that if we see the need for evangelizing those who are without, we

will have to redeem the time in order to be able to evangelize properly.

## **Bible View of Time**

We need to look at time as God sees it and not necessarily as we do. For example: John 11:9 says, *“...Are there not twelve hours in the day?...”*

For us this is true some times during the year, and some times it is not. But in the Bible, it was always true. Their hours were shorter in the winter and longer in the summer. They just took the amount of daylight and divided it into 12 even segments — hours. We, through all of our technical figuring, have come to conclusions which are a little different. Do not let your pre-conceived ideas govern what you read in the Bible. In Bible times, they figured time differently than we do. Isn't it amazing how much they were able to accomplish? We tend to think things will not work unless they are done “our way” — the Bible will work no matter what the world thinks.

Revelation 1:19 gives us some basic, but very helpful, concepts regarding time. It says, *“Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.”* This lays out the three basic divisions of time: past, present, and future.

We need to learn to look at time in these three divisions: what has been, what is, and what is going to be. Many people have this confused. They either try to live in the past or else they attempt to live in the future – both of which are very unreal worlds. Both of these approaches waste the present time that we have. Keep the past in the past, present in the present, and the future in the future.

A good application of this is seen in Exodus 3:14, *“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”* Here we see God calling himself by the name I AM. Jesus also used this name in the gospel of John. God does

not claim the name I WAS, AM, AND EVER SHALL BE. He claimed the present tense. A name is used for identification, and here is a clear example of God identifying with the present.

To Him, everything is in the present. Aren't you glad that God does not live in the past or the future, but instead He lives in the present with us? The devil hates God. He will try to destroy you in the time concept by trying to keep you out of the realm which God inhabits – the present. If he can get you to focus on the past or the future, then you are where God does not operate.

Older people often say, "I remember how it used to be", and they are not doing anything for God. Younger people say, "One day I will get my chance", and they are not doing anything for God either. The devil will switch us from one to the other, and sometimes back and forth. He really does not care if we are in the past or future, as long as he can keep us from the present, where God operates.

To take this point a little farther, it is important to realize that an overemphasis on prophecy can be assisted by the devil because it keeps us dwelling on the future. Those who talk about past revivals and how they expect one in the future never see it in their lifetime. They really do not expect to see it. We need to learn to live where we exist – the present. Many of us put off until tomorrow the changes it will take to begin using time wisely – but the truth is, tomorrow never comes!

We need to understand that the function of the past is to give us a better understanding for operating in the present. The function of the future is to give us direction for the present. The past and future are necessary, but are not where we should live. They are only time frames from which we learn.

Studying how God has moved and worked in the past should encourage us to know what He can do today. You can also see what God is going to do in the future and it would thrill you to see where He

is headed today. Be careful to make sure that your studies always bring you back to where God operates – the present.

## **Time and Mankind**

Genesis 1:14 shows us that time was not created for God, but rather for us. It states: *“And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons and for days, and years:”*. The establishment of time was a part of creation. *“In the beginning...”* shows us that there was a time before there was time, and God lived in it. When God was preparing earth for man to live on, He was also preparing time for man to live in. He designed the divisions we have in present time: seven-day weeks, seasons and years.

People have tried to experiment with eight-day, nine-day, and ten-day weeks, but they have found that people (and machines) perform better if they work six days and rest one – just as God ordained.

Mark 2:27 (“...*The sabbath was made for man,...*”) shows that the week was established for the benefit of man.

James 4:13-17 gives us further guidelines. In verse 14, we receive the solemn warning that our life – or the time we have in which to operate – is an uncertain thing and could end at any time. Verse 15 shows us that though life may end abruptly, we still need to plan for the future. There needs to be a balance between being ready to meet God at any moment and planning for the future if God allows us more time. This is Biblical time management. Our plans need to be based on what God’s will is, not our own will. Discern God’s will for the future in your life, if God is gracious enough to let you live that long. Verse 17 lays down the principle that the foundation of all of your plans, both present and future, ought to be what is GOOD – not what is favorable, easy, profitable, or successful, but what is good.



Philippians 3:13 gives more instruction on proper time management. It states, “... *but this one thing I do ...*” This clearly points out the importance of focusing on doing just one thing at a time. Most of us try to do three things at once – and none of them end-up getting done and done well. You will get those three things done more quickly if you focus on one at a time.

### **Times and Seasons**

Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us that for everything there is a season and a time. God does not want us doing everything all the time. There are certain seasons for certain things. Our farmers operate on this basis – but how often do we?

There are particular opportunities for our lights to shine during the different times of war and peace, depression and prosperity, but we act as though these seasons are all the same. As a result, we end up wasting a lot of time. When we are truly “*redeeming the time*”, we need to know which

time or season we are in (Ecclesiastes 3:2-8), and then operate accordingly.

The first 12 verses of Psalm 90 deal much with the matter of time. Verse 2 says, *“Before the mountains ... even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.”* God is eternal. There never has been a time He was not God, and there never will be a time that He will not be God. As humans, we cannot grasp the full meaning of this. We are so accustomed to “beginnings” and “endings”. We are born, we die; we begin a project; we complete it (or perhaps get stopped in the middle or quit). God inhabits eternity as well as living in the present.

Verse 4 shows how irrelevant time is to God. The Bible says that 1,000 years are like yesterday to Him. Yesterday always seems much shorter than today does. To God, the last 5,000 years would be as our last five days – an insignificant thing.

Verse 9 brings a new light to the way we look at time. The second part of the verse states, “... we *spend our years as a tale that is told.*” Time is a precious commodity that is to be carefully spent. Time is more important than money. When you go into the store with a handful of money, you spend it carefully. When you enter life, you are given only a handful of years. You do not even know how many. How are you going to spend them? Will they just slip through your fingers, leaving you to wonder where all the time has gone?

The Bible tells us how to spend our years, “... *as a tale that is told*”. You have a certain number of years to create a life’s story to be told, and it will be told. Our tales will be told after we are gone. How much of a story are we building? Will it be a long story or a short one? Will it take minutes or hours to tell your tale? Will your tale be useful to others when it is told?

In verse 10, we are told that the days of our years will be 70 or 80 years. Some people may get a few more years and some will get less, but this is the “average”. Verse 12 instructs us to “*number our days*”. We lose and waste our years one day at a time, just like we waste our money one dollar at a time. Seventy years are equal to 25,550 days and eighty years are equal to 29,200 days. How many days have you spent already? (Thirty years contain 11,000 days). Subtract the number of days you have used, from what you think you will get, to find how many days you have left to spend. Now, decide how you want to spend them.

The way you use your remaining days will determine what changes will be made in your life’s story. What areas do you want changed, and how will you use your time to change them? What do you want recorded in the remaining chapters of your life?

How much of your life’s tale will tell of things you have done for Jesus? – For the flesh? – For the

world? – In idleness and wasted time? Are you going to let this continue or will you begin to spend your time more wisely?

There are several things we can learn in numbering our days. First, the verse is a prayer of Moses. It appears that he learned how to use the last 40 years of his life more wisely than the first 40 years. Do we pray about proper use of our time? Second, God is very capable of teaching us to number our days. We need to ask Him to teach us. Third, we need to be concerned enough to learn. Lastly, if we number our days, it will teach us to apply our hearts unto wisdom.

There are 168 hours in one week – no more and no less. How do you spend your time during the week? Some things are “constants” – you need them every week, but different people need different amounts of time for them. How much time do you spend on: worship, study, service, prayer, work (40-70 hours), sleep (56 hours), eating (15 hours), home duties, family, recreation,

relaxation, education, amusements, etc.? Write the hours down, add them up (168 hours), and check your priorities by your practice.

One key point in the matter of applying our hearts unto wisdom involves setting priorities about which things we can afford to spend time on and which ones we cannot. Too much time spent in one area leaves no time or too little time for another. To put too little time in most of these areas will leave serious deficiencies in parts of our lives. We need to realize how serious and essential balancing these categories is. If we let our family life fail because we neglect to spend time with them, the church will suffer. There must be time for the family – yet some people worship family to the neglect of God. If you can reach a balance in these areas, the story of your life will come out balanced. Otherwise, it will come out a mess.

There will be a time of accountability for us. If we have to account for every idle word (Matt. 12:36),

does it not seem probable that we will give account for idle years, days, and even hours? REDEEM THE TIME! Let the past motivate your present and future, but do not waste today waiting for tomorrow.

You have 25,000 days (give or take a few) to live. That will soon be gone! We are so accustomed to large numbers like millions or billions. One hundred thousand dollars for a home is not usual in some places, but \$30,000 often is. Thirty thousand days is over 80 years!

You will not get a chance to rewrite the tale of your life, or even get a chance to edit the parts you do not want included. You can determine, by how you spend your time, what is written in the next chapters of your life's story.

Ephesians 5:17 states, *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."* Knowing God's will is part of a proper use of time. How will you know you are using God's



time right if you do not know what His will is? But, if you know what His will is, and you are operating within His will, surely that must be a proper use of time. You can't improve on that.

## **Time Redemption**

“Redeeming the time” involves more than just proper usage of time. It also involves “buying back” something that is lost. Consider how many days of your life are spent. How many of those were spent properly? Improperly? How do you plan to recover some kind of usage of those lost days? What is your plan for redeeming that time? Let's look at how that time might have been lost in the first place.

Time is lost if we do one of three things with it: First, time is lost if we ignore what was done in it. Second, time is lost if we “scrap” or discard what was done in it, and third, time can be lost if we cut ourselves off from the past. However, time is

never lost if we learn something from it, if we build on it, or if we salvage opportunities from it.

How, then, can we “buy back” time that we have wasted? As you examine the years you feel have been “wasted”, try to look at them with several things in mind:

1. Remember any lessons you may have learned during that time. These may be able to help you help others.
2. Look for opportunities you may be able to pursue. Good examples of these opportunities are former acquaintances, contacts with friends, war buddies, family, and class reunions. Keep up with any contacts you may have made. It takes a long time for us to get to know people and for them to trust us – but from your “wasted years” you may have countless contacts with people who will be able to see the changes in your life. There are also possibilities of influence you may have in

someone's life to be exercised for God's glory, rather than for wickedness, as it was during the former years. Redeeming the time lost in the past will save time now and in the future.

Our past lays the foundations for the present and the future. You can add to the foundation to reach into more areas. Our potential is increased by what has been done with time in our past.

Ephesians 5:15 tells us that if we learn how to redeem the time, both in the past and present, we will walk wisely, and thus accomplish more. We need to be wise to the fact that time is not entirely lost, but can be bought back. Paul used the benefits of his Roman citizenship ... something from his past.

Remember that redeeming the time helps us to know the will of the Lord (Ephesians 5:17). Using things you learned in the past will help you understand and determine God's will. Verse 18

goes on to say that knowing how to redeem the time will help us to stay sober and be filled with the Spirit. The rest of Chapter 5 and most of the next chapter is dedicated to show the order you must go through to use your time wisely. Here are evidences of a life that is being filled with the Spirit in regard to the proper use of time. Verses 19-21 deal with the devotional life of an individual. The rest of Chapter 5 also deals with husband/wife relationships. It takes time to have good devotions, but if your devotional life is not “up to par”, your relationship with your spouse will be hindered. The first four verses of Chapter 6 are instructions on parent/child relationships. It takes time to train children, but if the parents are not getting along, it will hurt their effectiveness in dealing with their children. Verses 7-9 deal with work relationships. If things are amiss at home, you can be sure it will be rough at work. The next ten verses of Chapter 6 deal with the spiritual warfare. Until our devotions, home life and work relationships are right, we cannot effectively fight the spiritual warfare.

## **Time for Resting**

Mark 6:30-32 shows the need for rest. Verses 31, 32 read, *“And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.”*

This shows that rest times are necessary and ordained by God. Jesus told His disciples to *“come apart and rest a while”*. Someone once said if you do not come apart and rest, you will just come apart.

Rest times are not a waste of time, but instead can be very helpful. Some benefits include recovery from long, hard work weeks, reflection, relaxation, getting things back into perspective, rest, meditation, prayer, and preparation for the future. You will not get all of these accomplished in one week. But in Exodus 23:14-17, God ordained three separate religious vacation times a

year for His people. Leviticus 23 shows that there were seven different feasts to be observed during these three times. The feasts varied in length, manner of observance, purpose, the picture they portrayed, and were held three different times of the year – spring, early summer, and fall.

Later in Scriptures, we see two more feasts added (Esther 9 and John 7). While God did not originate them, neither did He condemn them. Rather, He saw fit to have them recorded in His Word.

God wants us to redeem the time, but He also wants us to spend a certain amount of time in rest. These times can be used properly and have great benefits.

## **Time Management**

If you do not manage your time, you will lose it. You can either be in control of it, or it will be out of control. God has given us both directions and

illustrations to help us in this. There are six major categories in time management.

The first category is to set priorities. Without having priorities, your time may not be spent the way that you want it to be spent. Several Scriptures are given to help us in setting priorities. I Corinthians 14:33 states, *“For God is not the author of confusion,...”* You do not have to do two things at once. God does not demand more of you than He gives you time to accomplish. Colossians 3:17 and 23 state, *“And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.”* (vs. 17) and *“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men”*; (vs. 23). We need to establish the principle that we are doing what we are doing for the sake of God. If you are doing it for the flesh, it will change your whole priority schedule. Some simple questions you can ask to see whether you are trying to glorify God through actions are:



- ✓ Am I spending too much time, and it's not glorifying God?
- ✓ Should I spend more time in order to glorify God?
- ✓ Am I able to do these things "*as unto the Lord*"?

Matthew 6:33 (a verse with which we are familiar) states, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*" The "*things*" spoken of here are what has been discussed in the previous verses. One of these "*things*" is family. God's work and your family should not come into conflict. If that happens, either the church or the family is out of line or out of balance. The family and the church must work together; a church is no stronger than its families, and a family needs a church to stay spiritually healthy.

One important thing to remember when you are setting priorities is the long-range effects of your decisions. Some decisions may represent the "*easiest*" solution for the present, but you must

look ahead and see how that decision will affect the future. Your ultimate goal in setting your priorities should be to please God.

The second thing to do toward having proper time management after you have set your priorities, is to set goals. This deals with spending your years carefully so as to have a positive tale to be told after you are gone. There are three basic time frames for goals; what you want to accomplish in a week; in a year, and in a lifetime. Now let's look at what a goal is. There are at least five qualifications for a good, Christian goal:

1. Something that is possible – NOT A DREAM
2. Something that is possible with effort – not something that will “just happen”
3. Something that's measurable
4. Something that requires extra effort (stretching to obtain your goal)
5. Something that cannot be done without God's help (*“without faith it is impossible to please God”*).

Keep in mind that your goals will be judged as well as your actions. If the motives behind your goals are not proper, God will not approve your goals.

The third step to take toward proper management is planning and organization toward reaching your goals. Surprisingly enough, you may not reach the goal you had set for yourself. David had hoped to build the temple, but God would not let him. He got the materials together for his son to be able to build it. David spent the rest of his life getting ready for something that he never saw completed (I Chronicles 22-23:6 and II Chronicles 2 – the first part of the chapter). You may be called on to lay the groundwork for someone to see revival after your death. Other Scriptural examples of planning and organization include:

1. Creation – the order was well planned and thoroughly organized
2. Moses – organized the tribes of Israel as to how they would march, where they would live, which tribes would be next to which tribe ...

3. Ezra – planned and organized for the return of the people to the Promised Land
4. Nehemiah – planned and organized for the putting up of the wall.

Organization does not exclude God, but instead it works with Him.

The fourth principle we will look at is that of accountability. We are accountable, first of all, to God himself (Romans 4:12). The saved are accountable to the church (Acts 14:27, 28). We are also accountable to God's chosen leaders (Acts 15:2). There is also accountability within a family: Wives are accountable to husbands, and husbands to wives. Children are accountable to their parents, and to some degree, parents are accountable to their children. (Remember that God warns the fathers not to provoke their children to wrath). Lastly, we are accountable to our government.

The fifth area to look at is problem solving. Because of sin, problems are always going to arise. Since it is going to take time to solve these

problems, you had better allow time for them. The next question is – how much time do you allow for problems? The answer is – enough but not too much. How do you know what is enough but not too much? You must put a priority on prayer. God knows all about your problems – what they will be, how long they will take to solve, and He can guide you to know how much time to leave for solving these problems. When a problem arises, identify the problem in terms of your goals and not your emotions. This will help to put a perspective on the problem. Analyze the problem in terms of how it affects others and, also, in terms of getting your goals accomplished. Keep in mind that many “problems” are not really the problem, but are merely symptoms of the real problems. It is also important to remember that often problems are opportunities in disguise. What looks like a problem may just be an opportunity to witness to someone or may afford some other type of opportunity. When problems arise, consider Biblical teachings, examples, and principles that apply to problem solving. Think

your way through the Bible until you come upon something that you can use. Consider the various options of how God may have dealt with this situation at different times, and then pray for God's direction. Two Biblical examples of where this process was used can be found in Acts 15:1-34 and Acts 21:18-26.

The sixth and final principal to look at is one of evaluating the use of your time. The first step in evaluating is to compare everything to Christ (Ephesians 4:13). Would Jesus put on a clown suit and play tricks to reach kids? Would Jesus preach the Word of God? Look at the results of what you are doing. Is it more Christ-like or is it less Christ-like? The second step in evaluating is to compare how it matches the standards of the Scriptures. Ask yourself, "What does the Bible say"? Or "How do the Scriptures apply"? The third step in evaluating is to search to see whether there are Biblical goals, motives, and methods involved. Finally, in your evaluation NEVER compare yourself with other people. II Corinthians 10:12 states, "... but they measuring themselves by

*themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.”*

Now that we have discussed the principles which will aid in proper time management, it is important to see how we can be most efficient in our time usage. The Scriptures teach the principle that one will chase 1,000 but two will put 10,000 to flight. That is why Jesus sent out His disciples two by two. The Apostle Paul is another good example of this. Two people working together can influence 10,000 while those same two, working in separate places can influence 2,000. If you want to get a job done better, get two people “yoked together” and they will finish more quickly.

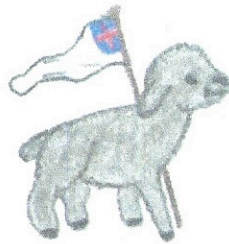
## **Conclusion**

*“Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be*



*good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God;...” (II Corinthians 5:9-11a).*

Our life story is being written out before the eyes of God. One day we shall appear at the judgment seat to receive according to how that story turned out – good or bad. Let us so spend our days to God’s glory that we look forward with joy to giving our account to Jesus our Lord and Savior (Romans 14:12).



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