

# How To Get More Done In Less Time

In a recent survey people expressed the number two pressure in life was the pressure of time, mostly the lack of time.

One thing about time is it is most unco-operative: when you want time to slow down what happens?

It speeds up!

When you want time to pass quickly what happens?

It seems to “*drag its heels*”.

**It always seems that there is not enough time in each day; not enough hours to get everything done.**

God’s Christian Bible gives us some very practical steps for managing our time more wisely.

## **Step One: Analyse your life style**

In other words, carefully evaluate how we schedule our day, consider our total life – where we are heading, be aware of time wasters.

**Ephesians 5:15** [NIV] “*Be very careful then how you live, not as unwise but as wise.*”

**The opposite to careful living is careless living, and most people live carelessly.**

**They don’t have goals, values or priorities.**

They don’t know where their time is going.

**We cannot save time until we first know where our time is going – being used up.**

We need to identify the “*leaks of time*” in our lives.

**Aristotle said once, “*the unexamined life is not worth living*”, which is very true when we meditate on that statement.**

Most people are like the man in an opinion poll when asked the question “*Do you think that most people are ignorant and apathetic?*” replied “*I don’t know and I don’t care.*”

I once added up all the things I felt I needed to do in one week and they added up to 182 hours, which makes it rather hard, as there is only 168 hours in a week.

No wonder I felt under pressure.

**We will never get control of our time until we pause and look at our life style.**

Let me give you a project.

**This coming week, make a record of how you spend your time for the entire week.**

**Then look at and analyse just how you did spend your time and ask the questions.**

“*Am I satisfied with how I spent that time in the light of my goals in life?*”

That is if you do have specific goals in your life!

*“If I keep going in the direction I’m going now, where will I be in 10 years time?”*

*“Am I making the best use of my time now?”*

**Proverbs 4:26** [Good News Bible] *“Plan carefully what you do, and whatever you do will turn out right.”*

## **Step Two: Utilise the present**

**Ephesians 5:16** [NIV] *“Making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil.”*

**Take full advantage of today, capitalise on current possibilities.**

The second common mistake in time management is we waste the present time.

Why do we do this?

**We get involved in the two greatest time wasters:**

a) regret;

b) worry.

**We regret the past and worry about the future.**

**When both of these are beyond our immediate control, that is a foolish waste of today.**

Let me give you an example:-

Imagine you had a benefactor who was going to place in your bank account every day £86,400 with only one condition – whatever part of that amount was not used each day would be lost and transferred to another person.

What would you do each day with that money?

You would draw out and use every £1 in that account every day!

Well, a great benefactor has given you 86,400 golden seconds of time every day to use, which will also be lost to you if not all used wisely each day.

**If you don’t use it you lose it.**

**You cannot take any of today’s time into tomorrow!**

**How do we make the most of today’s opportunities?**

a) **You live in the now.**

When you *“kill time”* you are not committing murder, you are committing suicide, because your life is made up of time!

**When you waste time you are wasting your life.**

b) **You don’t procrastinate.**

**Proverbs 27:1** [NIV] *“Don’t boast about tomorrow for you do **not** know what a day may bring forth?”*

## **Opportunities don't last.**

Have you heard such statements such as “*great saving opportunities for a limited period only*”.

If you delay the reply to your request may be “*oh, that opportunity ended last week*”.

I read a little poem this week:-

*I've gone for a drink and sharpened my pencils,  
Searched through my desk for forgotten utensils;  
Re-set my watch and adjusted my chair,  
Loosened my tie and straightened my hair.  
Filled my pen and tested the blotter,  
Gone for another drink of water;  
Adjusted the calendar, raised the blind,  
Sorted erasers of different kind.  
Now down to work I can finally sit.  
Woops! Too late, it's time to quit.*

That poem represents a lot of lives.

I want to give you now three words that guarantee unconditionally to change your life if you apply them.

Are you ready?

Here they are.

### **Do it now.**

The Christian Bible says “*make the most of every opportunity,*” [**Ephesians 5:16**].

**That is not an option, it is a command; and if we don't do it we sin [miss the very purpose of life].**

## **Step Three: Recognise what is important**

**Ephesians 5:17** [NIV] “*Therefore, do not be foolish but understand what the Lord's Will is.*”

**Realise that God created us for a purpose; that we are not here by accident: we need to focus on that plan for our life.**

**Success is knowing what is God's Plan for our lives and living in the centre of that Plan.**

God has a unique purpose for every person's life, and when I get in the middle of that purpose, I will use my time wisely, getting my priorities right by recognising what is important in my life.

Another thing that causes us to get under stress and tension is that we **major on minors in our lives and so minor on major things.**

**We don't make time for the things that are lasting and really important.**

**Two things I have learnt about God's Will for my life.**

a) **I can't do everything;** most of us know this but we still feel guilty when we fail to do all we feel we should.

b) **I then learnt that I shouldn't do everything**, which relieved the guilt feeling.

Some things are **not** important in our lives, because God has **not** gifted us in that area of life. Therefore we should not try to “*major*” in them.

**Selection is the name of the game.**

**1 Corinthians 10:23** [NIV] *“Everything is permissible, but not everything is beneficial. Everything is permissible, but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good but the good of others.”*

**What we need to ask is what I am majoring in for my benefit exclusively or will it be beneficial to others and build them up?**

**There are some jobs that should never be done, some letters that should not be written, some books that should never be read.**

There are some books that I can read at 50,000 words a minute: I pick them up, look at the contents table and say “*that's not worth reading*” and put them down.

That's faster than “*speed reading*”.

**We don't have time for everything, so recognise what is important and use our limited time to accomplish those things.**

For example, still on the subject of reading, The Sunday Times newspaper has more words in it than the New Testament in The Bible.

Which do we choose to read for our personal growth in knowledge and character?

**God has given us just enough time to do His Will.**

**If we find ourselves under pressure it means one of two things:**

a) **We are doing the wrong thing**, so misusing our limited time.

b) We are **doing the right thing but in the wrong way**, also misusing our time.

**Ephesians 5:17** [Phillips Translation] *“Don't be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the Will of the Lord.”*

I'm only accountable to God to get His Will for my life accomplished and if I don't fulfil all the other things I would like to do in my life, it is okay.

**So for a Christian the issue is what is God's Will for my life?**

**God's Will is unique for every one of us; different for different people, but there are some basics to God's Will for everyone.**

a) **Knowing:-**

To know God and have a personal relationship with Him, **not** a religion but a relationship.

b) **Growing:-**

God wants us to grow up to mature, mentally and spiritually.

To understand what life is for.

This is why God has given us The Bible, and the church fellowship.

c) **Going:-**

God wants us to go into the world and tell other people about God and His Love for mankind and His Plan for mankind's future.

God wants us to share our faith.

**These are the basics in life and when we don't have these in our life everything else will be out of focus.**

## **Step Four: Equalise the pressure**

When you fly high in an aircraft, the cabin is pressurised for our comfort, because the pressure of the atmosphere changes with the varying height of the aircraft.

The aircraft cabin is blown up like a balloon [14lbs per square inch is standard].

**This is the principle in physics of the Law of Equilibrium.**

You counter an external pressure with an internal force to maintain equilibrium.

**The way we equalise pressure in our life from the outside is to fill yourself with something on the inside.**

**Ephesians 5:18** [NIV] *“Do not get drunk with wine, which leads to debauchery [ruin]. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit.”*

**Have you noticed that every time people get under pressure and stress they automatically try to compensate the situation by filling themselves with something.**

This is a natural reaction to stress from the outside to fill yourself with something on the inside.

The only difference between people is what you choose to fill the inside with.

Some reach for the glass and bottle and fill the inside with alcohol.

I predict that as stress and pressure increase in our society, so will alcohol abuse.

There is a new executive disease, it is called *“cocktail lounge arthritis”*: every night you get stiff in a different joint!

Other people fill themselves with drugs: when outside pressure hits them, out come the tranquillisers – pot, cocaine.

Others fill the inside with smoke.

There is now a *“smokers anonymous call line”* where you dial the number and hear someone cough for five minutes.

I heard the story of one man who used to travel on public transport frequently who has a card that he hands out to those around him.

It says, *“I notice that you smoke: well, I chew, so I promise that if you don't blow smoke on me I will not spit on you.”*

More often than not do you know what we fill the inside with when under pressure from the outside?

Food.

When we get under stress we look around for anything we can get into our mouth.

We have many more problem eaters than problem drinkers in this society.

**When I get under stress my idea of a balanced diet is to have something in both hands.**

What Paul is saying to us is that you don't have to fill up with other things when under stress if we allow God's Holy Spirit to fill our life.

**Let God equalise the pressure with a power in us that will always equalise the pressure outside.**

**1 John 4:4** [NIV] *"The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*

**Philippians 4:13** [NIV] *"I can do everything through Him who gives me strength."*

**Philippians 4:13** [Phillips Translation] *"I am ready for anything through the strength of the one who lives within me."*

**Romans 8:31** [Living Bible] *"If God is on our side, who can ever be against us?"*

**John 14:15-18** [NIV] *"If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever, **the Spirit of truth**. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; **I will come to you.**"*

**What does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit?**

It is **not** something scary, **not** something mystical.

**You just invite Christ into your life.**

His Peace, His Power, His Presence through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit whom He has sent.

This will give us inner strength and stability.

**How can you tell when someone is filled with the Holy Spirit?**

Do we become some wild-eyed fanatic?

No!

A person filled with God's Holy Spirit is stable when under stress.

They don't *"cave in"*.

Because of the inner power that counters the pressures from outside, they are strong under stress.

**Step Five: Let Holy Spirit stimulate you**

**Ephesians 5:18** [Phillips Translation] *"Don't get your stimulus from wine (for there is always the danger of excessive drinking), but let the Spirit stimulate your souls."*

**Find your stimulus from God being in your life.**

Have you heard someone say or have you said it yourself, *"I've got to have something to get me through this day that is ahead of me"*?

Next time you say or think this, instead of a “*coffee break*” try a “*prayer break*”.

Get alone and in the quiet ask God to fill you with His Purpose for your life, His peace and His love.

The word used here in the Greek is a continuous action word, “*keep on being filled with the spirit*”.

**Not just a one time incident in your life, but a daily receiving of that stimulus.**

## **Step Six: Have a positive attitude at all times**

**Ephesians 5:19-20** [Living Bible] “*Talk with each other much about the Lord, quoting psalms and hymns and singing sacred songs, making music in your hearts to the Lord. Always give thanks for everything to our God and Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*”

A positive attitude towards life is the natural result and fruit of applying the former five steps.

Instead of gripping, you are singing.

Instead of complaining, you are thanking.

Instead of being negative, you are positive.

Why? Because you know where you are going.

After

- a) analysing your life style
- b) utilising the present
- c) recognising what is important
- d) equalised the pressure by accepting Christ in your life to counter outside pressure
- e) stimulated your life by the Holy Spirit

Your attitude to life is good [positive] not bad [negative] and bad attitudes are time wasters.

I give you a challenge this week.

Take time off to look at your life and analyse just where it is leading you.

Are we on course for the direction we want our lives to take?

**Take time to ask what are difficult questions.**

Am I using my time wisely, to the best of my ability?

Do I really desire God’s Will for me to be fulfilled in my life?

Am I making time count for something valuable or am I wasting it on things that are not really important?

Am I taking full advantage of what I have in my life today?

Get, if need be, victory over procrastination in our lives.

Or ask God to help us get rid of the past regrets and stop worrying about the future to see the opportunities I have right now.

Say *“help me God to do it now”*.

Ask the question, *“What is really important in my life?”*

*“Is it something that is short lived or eternal?”*

If we **don’t** know what we value in life we are living carelessly.

We **don’t** have time for everything, we must select our priorities.

Ask the question, *“Am I knowing, growing and going with God in my life?”*

The very basics of well-used time in our lives.

Ask, *“Am I allowing God to equalise the pressure in my life by the indwelling of His Holy Spirit?”*

*“Am I allowing Christ into my life so that I have stability in my life through His Peace, His Purpose and His Power?”*

**Proverbs 10:27** [Living Bible] *“Reverence for God adds hours to each day.”*

**If I spend a quiet time with God each day in reading His Word and speaking to Him in prayer, it will add hours to my day.**

How?

Because I use my time more wisely.

I won’t be living carelessly.

This is basic.

If we don’t manage our time, we are **not** managing our lives, for time is our life.

**An unmanageable life means we need a manager in our life.**

**That is what “Lord” means: manager, master, controller, director and there is only one Lord, Jesus Christ.**

*“I only have just a minute  
Just sixty seconds in it.  
Forced upon me  
Can’t refuse it.  
Didn’t seek it  
I didn’t choose it.  
I must suffer if I lose it.  
Give account of how I use it.  
Just a tiny little minute  
But eternity is in it.”*