

## Introduction to TIME

### LOST WORDS FOUND!

Let me first take a minute to introduce you to the format of the following sections. It springs from an awareness that much has been lost in our country (the USA) with regards to the rich Christian heritage that was well known but just a few generations ago and from my desire to illustrate one aspect of this loss as it relates to the usage of common expressions found in our everyday language.

Therefore, each section that follows will first incorporate an expression that I feel is still in use today, but perhaps misunderstood by many people, as they are not familiar with its origin and the corresponding context in the Bible. I have tried to link these expressions to the section topic in which they occur. I may not be entirely successful here, and of course you are free to disagree or debate my accuracy or philosophy and this I highly encourage. In fact, I am expecting and praying for no less for it is my very intention to provoke critical thinking in a good way, believing that “the truth will out”.

Following this, I have included my thoughts related to the section; a short discussion of its importance along with application notes summarized at the end. By this I mean a “how to” section where one can “practice what is preached”.

You might also find a reference to a song that I feel will assist in making the point at hand (ie., in the Music section).

## TIME

“ELEVENTH HOUR DECISION”

*This expression is used today to convey a last minute decision. I imagine a similar phrase could be “better late than never”. The most likely source for the above is the history of the thief on the cross who accepted Jesus. Having lived a life of sin, he confessed shortly before death just what he was and claimed Jesus as Lord and Saviour. To which Jesus, responded “...this very day, you shall be with me in Paradise”; Luke 23:43. Another image of this “last minute” choice is also conveyed in a parable by Jesus, in Matthew 20:6, where idle workers are put to work for a full day’s wages, even though they started at the eleventh hour.*

To live backwards is evil (literally). There is something that would keep us from God, and that is Evil. (It shouldn’t surprise us that the word “live”, spelled backwards is “evil” as this entity’s goal is to rob us of life.)

Evil works in many ways, taking advantage of this thing called “time”. It is interesting to think that each of us has the same amount of time in any given hour, minute and second, to do what we will with it. In a speech to George Mason University graduates, Judge William Rehnquist remarked that it is up to us to decide how to spend this commodity in the “shopping mall” of life and, out of the countless “items on sale”, to decide if we want the best backhand in tennis, or

if a particular friendship should be cultivated instead. The choice is ours; all we have to do (or should do) is verify the value of that item that we are “purchasing” with our time.

Evil, however, is the ultimate salesman. He knows how to present the baser, less noble items in such a way that we do not choose wisely and squander our “currency” of time on mediocre, meaningless and most often, dangerous goods. Evil also is aware of the one important thing that we often tend to overlook, namely, that we do not know how much time any of us has left in our account. In *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis offers a picture of the glee that the devil has when he can occupy a person’s time in any activity that is God-less, for he has reduced the chance of that person choosing to seek God and subsequently spending time getting to know Him.

A simple and commonly used definition of sin is “that which separates us from God”. (to the believer this is real death) We do not often see this impediment, this obstacle that gets in the way of our relationship with God. It can take many forms, from objects to ideas, or to people with ideas. Indeed, a shocking (at first glance) example of this is found in the New Testament book of Matthew when Jesus rebukes an argumentative Peter saying “get thee behind me Satan”. It is shocking in the sense that Jesus seems to be calling His disciple Satan. But it is evident that Peter had come up with an idea that was contrary to God’s will, and Jesus wanted nothing to do with it. Note the imperative and the positioning that Jesus’ statement portends; Satan is in front of Him and as such, is coming between Him and the Father. Jesus loses no time in removing the obstacle and tells him

where to go; behind Him. Nothing was to come between Jesus and His Father.

We know that both of the thieves on the crosses at Jesus' side understood the bad choices they had made, for one said "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds;". While one was saved and went to be with Jesus in Paradise, both missed the opportunity you have now been given; that of making a choice to start living with Him here on earth, before your span of life on earth has ended.

QUESTION – How will you choose to “spend your time”? Remember that everything has a price, but not everything has lasting value.

#### APPLICATION POINTS

- ❑ Don't wait to turn to the Lord, i.e., the expression “better late than never” might prompt you to wait for an 11<sup>th</sup> hour decision. Instead, decide now to use your currency of time to turn to God and develop your relationship with Him now – believe the Bible verse from Matthew 6:33, “Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you.”
- ❑ Live forward, not backward – Spend time in the Word. Read the Bible and find a church that will teach you about the salvation that comes through Jesus Christ.
- ❑ Look ahead - Farmer's know that you cannot plow a straight furrow while looking over your shoulder and

Jesus used this imagery in Luke 9:62 when he said “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

- Acknowledge your sin before God; with His help you can change your ways (repenting is turning around) so you conform to His righteousness more and more, as time goes on. Use the “imperative” to place sin where it belongs, in the dumpster, so that it does not come between you and God.
- Remember – the loss of life I refer to is not just the death of the flesh, but is something of greater importance and more eternal in nature than the time span we have now at our disposal. It deals with your very soul.

## SONG

*A Thousand Things To Do*