

# The Leader's Time: Tick Tock, Manage the Clock

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## How to Steward Time and Manage Opportunities

“Teach us to number our days, O Lord, that we may apply our hearts with wisdom and let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands; Yes, establish the work of our hands.” (Psalm 90: 12, 17)

**“We must seize the opportunity of a lifetime during the lifetime of the opportunity.”**

Steve Hill, Pastor, TC Alumni

Leaders around the world agree: one of the greatest needs of their life is more time. Most admit that they don't manage their time as wisely as they should. Leaders are inundated with opportunities and activities, and frequently end up merely reacting to life instead of leading from a sense of purpose. There's just too much to do! One leader said: “God put me on this earth to accomplish a certain number of things. Right now—I am so far behind that I will never die!”

### Basic Facts on Time Management

1. We all \_\_\_\_\_ time.
2. We cannot \_\_\_\_\_ time.
3. We must accept this fact: time is the most \_\_\_\_\_ resource to mankind.
4. We cannot do anything to \_\_\_\_\_ the quantity of time.
5. We can \_\_\_\_\_ only time.
6. We can do anything, but we cannot do \_\_\_\_\_.
7. We must accept the fact that we all \_\_\_\_\_.

Management consultant, Peter Drucker once said, “Perhaps nothing else distinguishes effective executives as much as their loving care of time.” It is an interesting paradox we have today. Why is it that in primitive societies, nobody had a watch, but everybody had time. Yet, in today's society, nobody has time, but everybody has a watch! Where does time go that we gain by moving information faster than we did before? Why is it that we don't have more time with all the technology we've added to our lives? It's simple. We keep adding more information and activity to our lives. Our expectation for productivity has increased. And leaders are exhausted with the pace of our lives.

This course was originally designed by Equip Ministries, founded by John Maxwell. This version of the course has been adapted for use in Teen Challenge. For more information on this and other John Maxwell leadership courses designed by Equip Ministries, go the website: [www.iTeenChallenge.org](http://www.iTeenChallenge.org)

## Timely Advice about Time

### 1. Become \_\_\_\_\_ conscious.

Time conscious leaders are always aware of time and how it is used. They live in light of the big picture, managing each project in view of the total mission they seek to fulfill. They treat time as a valuable commodity. They recognize that time is even more valuable than money—you can always get more money, but you can never get more time. Effective leaders don't spend it ... they invest it for a return in God's Kingdom. They act as if nothing is worth more than the time they have today.

**Question:** Am I conscious of how my time is spent each day?  
Do I recognize wasted time?

### **What Time Is it for You by Life's Clock?** (A Parallel of a 70-Year Life Span with a 24-Hour Day)

If you are 20 .....it's 6:52 a.m.  
If you are 25 .....it's 8:35 a.m.  
If you are 30 .....it's 10:18 a.m.  
If you are 35 .....it's 12:00 p.m.  
If you are 40 .....it's 1:44 p.m.  
If you are 45 .....it's 3:27 p.m.  
If you are 50 .....it's 5:10 p.m.  
If you are 55 .....it's 6:53 p.m.  
If you are 60 .....it's 8:36 p.m.  
If you are 70 .....it's midnight!

### 2. Make a personal \_\_\_\_\_ for each week.

Our days are identical luggage ... all the same size ... but some people can fit more into their days than others. A detailed written account of how you spend each day is essential to mastering your time. After all, the amount of work we could finish is infinite - it's the hours in a day that are limited.

**Question:** Do you keep track of your time?  
What do you discover when you keep a record?

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#### 3. Identify your major \_\_\_\_\_ and eliminate one per week.

Henry Ford said, "It has been my observation that most people get ahead by using time that others waste." Leaders must not only know what consumes their time, but they must begin to eliminate those wasteful activities one at a time. When you identify the tasks that waste time, you have three options:

1. Discontinue them - Simply remove them from your calendar.
2. Delay them - If they must be done, perhaps there's a better time to do them later.
3. Delegate them - Identify someone who is gifted to take on the task.

**Question:** What are the major time wasters in your life today?

Time wasters are the enemies of opportunities. They consume your time so that you miss the opportunities that came today.

#### 4. Place a \_\_\_\_\_ on each activity.

Once you determine the value, you will make better use of your time. Most of us operate under pressure rather than priorities. I suggest you develop criteria for what is most important in your life and ministry. Develop not only a list of "core values," but also a list of "core activities" you will pursue each week. Review this list twice a year to re-evaluate your top priorities.

**Question:** Do you know the value of each activity you perform each week?

Let's unpack this issue and look at the key activities that you as a leader face at Teen Challenge.

**Question:** What are the top priorities—the core activities—of your ministry?

How much time are you devoting to each of these on a weekly basis?

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##### **Caution: Do not be seduced by the ministry of Teen Challenge!**

How does this happen? We can easily deceive ourselves with over-spiritualized thinking about our responsibilities as a leader. If there is an area that you do not enjoy doing, for example, fund-raising, you can say, "I will focus on doing ministry where I am gifted, and let God provide the finances. After all, the Bible says that God will provide all our needs according to his riches in glory." We end up neglecting key responsibilities in the name of doing "more important" ministry.

**Question:** What areas of TC ministry have you neglected in the name of doing other "more important" ministry?

**Question:** Have you identified a set of core values for your life and your ministry?

If yes, how are you integrating these core values into the time management of your key responsibilities?

##### 5. Be \_\_\_\_\_-oriented, rather than activity-oriented.

Activity does not necessarily equal accomplishment. Don't measure your success by how busy you are. Many leaders pride themselves on being busy; it is like they've earned a trophy for having so many people wanting their time, and being solely responsible for so many tasks. This gives a false sense of accomplishment. Jesus never rushed, but He got everything done His Father in heaven called Him to do. His goal was not to be busy, but to be fruitful.

**Question:** Do you measure how busy you are or how productive you are each day?

**Question:** What are the key accomplishments you have completed in your lifetime?

What are the key accomplishments you would like to complete in your lifetime?

What are you doing today to move you toward completing them?

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### 6. Understand the value of \_\_\_\_\_.

Planning often seems like such a waste of time. It feels too idle. Leaders frequently just want to get busy doing the task. But every minute spent in planning saves ten minutes in execution. Our God is a God of order. He tells us in the book of Isaiah that He planned the creation of the world. We know that Noah planned before he built the ark. Nehemiah planned before he and his team of builders executed the construction of the wall around Jerusalem. Planning is part of effective leadership. Consider this. In order to plan effectively, you must know ...

- What work is to be done
- How it is to be done
- When it is to be done
- Where it is to be done
- How fast it can be done

**Question:** Do you take the time to plan your work each day?

Why or why not?

### 7. Stay on your \_\_\_\_\_.

Top leaders must work to keep the main thing the main thing. You must help your team focus on the right agenda and not get sidetracked. For instance, one pastor in Canada does this well. He opens up his board meetings each month by reminding the elders of their purpose. Although they are business meetings, he begins by saying: “Gentlemen—we are meeting tonight to win souls. Every decision we make should enhance that agenda, not distract us from it.”

**Question:** The question is not will your calendar be full, but rather what will fill your calendar?

What is the “main thing” at your place of ministry?

Leaders must learn from the example of Jesus on how to respond to interruptions in your daily activities. Many of the most treasured stories from the life of Jesus were interruptions—the healing of blind Bartemaeus, lepers healed, demons cast out, and children coming to be blessed by Jesus. One day 4 men tore open a whole in the roof and let a man down in front of Jesus to be healed—talk about an interruption! But on another occasion he refused to get involved in a family dispute over how the inheritance should be divided. (Luke 12:12-14)

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**Question:** How do you handle interruptions in your day?

**Question:** Do interruptions keep you from your agenda?

How do you determine if an interruption is part of “God’s agenda” for your day?

When asked how he determined what God wanted him to do, David Wilkerson replied that he did as little as possible. He went on to explain that he only wanted to do what he was absolutely sure God wanted him to do. Successful leaders are frequently presented with wonderful opportunities—but are they God’s agenda? Leaders must learn to assess each opportunity and determine if it truly is God’s desire for them to invest time and energy in that opportunity. Some people want you to help them fulfill their agenda. One of the traits of great leaders is their ability to say “NO” to wonderful opportunities.

**Question:** How hard is it for you to assess wonderful opportunities and determine if it truly is God’s desire for you to invest time and energy in it?

## 8. Keep \_\_\_\_\_ where it belongs.

When we do something for someone else that they should do for themselves, we let them do something to us no one should do—steal our time and energy. Keep these items in mind:

- a. Decisions should be made at the lowest level possible.
- b. Don’t allow staff to bring you problems without bringing possible solutions.
- c. Empower others by believing they can keep commitments without being rescued.
- d. Follow the 80/20 Rule of Responsibility: Let others do the first 80%; you finish the final 20% of the project.

**Question:** When you give responsibilities away—do you tend to take them back?

**Question:** What responsibilities should you not give away—even if you would like to?

**Question:** What responsibilities should you give away that you are still holding on to?

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### 9. Assess your \_\_\_\_\_ level and \_\_\_\_\_.

Ask yourself such questions as:

- How much stress can I handle?
- How much “down time” do I require?
- How many hours can I spend each day working, being with people, being creative?
- What are THE most productive hours in my day?
- When should I handle administrative tasks and when should I do creative work?

**Question:** Do you understand your temperament?

Do you recognize your energy level?

### 10. Develop \_\_\_\_\_ for regular tasks and simplify everything.

Each of us has regular tasks each week. We should find systematic ways to perform them, to free up our minds and time to do creative work. Pastors should come up with a system for filing what they read for sermon preparation. Keep a book with you when you travel, so no time is wasted if you are delayed. Develop a system for correspondence and for returning phone calls. Handle mail only once; either throw it away, take action on it, or file it. Identify a place where you cannot be interrupted.

**Here's an assignment:** list the activities you do each week. Then, create the most effective system you can for accomplishing those tasks. When you implement the system, production will likely go up 30 percent.

**Question:** Do you have a system for all of your regular tasks?

### 11. Do the project \_\_\_\_\_ the first time.

It has been wisely said: If you don't have the time to do it right, when will you have the time to do it over? Once you decide an activity is a priority, invest the time to follow through and do it well. Honor God by doing the project with excellence. Colossians 3:17 reminds us: “Whatever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.”

**Question:** Do you execute some tasks half-heartedly?

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### 12. Place \_\_\_\_\_ on yourself.

Someone once suggested that two things are necessary to accomplish important tasks: “a plan” and “not enough time.” For some reason, humans perform better when they know there is an allotted time to finish the job. Leaders are no different. Your scheduled deadlines will always let you know whether you are ahead or behind on your work. They become an accountability partner.

People who procrastinate are interruption prone. They welcome interruptions and use them as an excuse for not setting deadlines or getting the job done. Procrastinators welcome the opportunity for diversion from duty. Deadlines are the cure for delay and indecision.

**Question:** Have I set deadlines on my work?

**Question:** What deadlines do you need to set for yourself today?

For the end of this week?

For the end of this month?

For the next 3 months?

### 13. \_\_\_\_\_ wisely.

Finally, good leaders handle their time wisely by becoming good at delegation. This does not mean they “dump” tasks on others. It means they think about what person is best for each task that arises. In order to do this, they ask themselves:

- a. What are my strengths and priorities?
- b. What are the strengths of my team members?
- c. What exactly is the task that must be done?
- d. Have I provided the resources for someone to do it?
- e. Have I clarified the level of their authority to make decisions?
- f. What are the tasks that I should not delegate?

**Question:** When you give responsibilities away—do you tend to take them back?

**Question:** Do you give away responsibilities that you should be keeping as the leader?



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**ASSESSMENT:** Review this list of 13 time management principles.  
Which of the items do you do well?  
Which need improvement?

Rate yourself on each one: "0" *Needs lots of improvement* to "10" *I do this really well*

1. Become time conscious.....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. Make a personal time log for each week .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Identify your major time wasters and  
eliminate one per week .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. Place a value on each activity .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. Be result-oriented, rather than activity-oriented .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. Understand the value of planning .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. Stay on your agenda.....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
8. Keep responsibility where it belongs.....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
9. Assess your energy level and temperament.....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
10. Develop systems for regular tasks  
and simplify everything .....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
11. Do the project right the first time.....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
12. Place deadlines on yourself.....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
13. Delegate wisely.....0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**APPLICATION:** List two steps you can take to be a better steward of your time.  
When will you take them?

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