

Time, Talent, and Treasure
I Peter 4:8-11; Ephesians 2:8-10; 5:15-16; Matthew 6:19-21
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Our Heavenly Father gives us all of the above but He allows us to determine how each will be used.

I believe that we are indeed in the “last days” and this is why we as Christians should live with an attitude of love.

I Peter 4:8, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

We should love one another because we have been commanded to love one another.

John 13:34, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.”

Love does indeed “...covers a multitude of sins.” Both the sins of the one loving and the sins of the one who is being loved. This means that we as Christians should be willing to forgive the sins that other Christians, and non-Christians as well, commit against us, and always have the attitude of forgiveness, always ready to forgive.

Love will show itself as we give to the church family what God has given us as gifts. Love will show itself in hospitality. As we do so, we are “good stewards” of the “manifold grace of God.” (I Peter 4:10)

In I Corinthians 15:10 Paul makes clear that he was what he was only by God’s grace. But at the same time, “His grace toward me did not prove vain;” because Paul put his own God-inspired efforts to work with God’s grace. The idea is that if we are bad “stewards of the manifold grace of God,” it is as if that grace was given to us in vain. That grace is wasted, because it only comes to us and does not move through us.

Everyone one of us as Christians has a job to do and every job that we do, whether small or great, is important. Even the smallest, seemingly least important part of the body of Christ is important.

Jam your little toe against anything and I guarantee you that your whole body will react to it.

As we serve one another, we do it with the strength God provides, the ability which God supplies – so that to Him belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever.

(I Peter 4:11)

Paul cannot speak of this glorious work that God does without reminding us that it is a gift of grace, given to the undeserving, that is you and me! We are saved by grace through faith.

2 – Time, Talent, and Treasure

As Paul is always emphasizing, it is entirely of His grace, His free, undeserved favor to mankind. The work of salvation is God's gift.

Paul's grammar here indicates that the words apply to the gift of salvation mentioned in Ephesians 2:4-8, and not directly to the faith mentioned in this verse (Ephesians 2:8). The original Greek is clear in noting that when it says "it is the gift of God," the "it" referred to is salvation, not faith.

Yet, even our faith is a gift of God. We cannot believe in Jesus unless God does a prior work in us, for we are blinded by our own deadness and by the god of this age.

II Corinthians 4:4 – "in whose case the god of this world had blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Since God initiates salvation, we should begin our evangelism with asking God to do the initiating, and granting the ability to believe to those we want to see saved.

God did it "not of works" simply so that no one could boast. If salvation was the accomplishment of man in any way, we could boast about it. But under God's plan of salvation, God, and God alone, receives the glory!

God saves us not merely to save us from the wrath we rightly deserve, but also to make something beautiful of us. We are "His workmanship," which translates the ancient Greek word *po-i-ema*. The idea is that we are His beautiful poem. The Jerusalem Bible translates "workmanship" as "work of art."

My! My! My!

God's love is a transforming love. It meets us right where we are, but when we receive this love it always takes us where we should be going. The love of God that saves my soul will also change my life.

My! My! My!

We are “His workmanship,” His creation – something new He has made us in Jesus Christ.

Works play no part at all in securing salvation. Works however, are valid evidence that someone is walking as one of God’s chosen, converted, changed, and committed.

God’s work of reconciliation is not only between God and the individual, though it must begin there. It is also between groups of people that are at odds, such as Jews and Gentiles were in the days of Paul.

3 – Time, Talent, and Treasure

There were two ancient Greek words used for time. One had the idea simply of a day upon day and hour upon hour. The other had the idea of a definite portion of time, a time where something should happen. It is the difference between time and the time.

The idea here is of the time; it is a definite season of opportunity that Christians must redeem. This same word is translated opportunity in Galatians 6:10 – “So then, while we have opportunity, let us do good to people, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Paul is not telling us to make the most of every moment, even though that is a very good thing to do. He tells us to seize opportunity for the glory of Jesus. It is not to make time, but to make the most of the time.

The idea behind redeeming the time is that you buy up opportunities like a shrewd businessman. You make the most of every opportunity for Jesus Christ.

There is another reason why it is important to walk wisely. Jesus spoke of a time when, many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

The believer who knows God and that He will judge the works of all His children fairly, will respect God and His evaluation of his life, and long to honor his Heavenly Father. We are to make the most of our time on this evil earth in fulfilling God’s purpose, following His plans, and functioning in His power.

Our main understanding of “the will of the Lord” comes from a good knowledge of His Word.

We as Christians have two choices when it comes to treasures. We will either “store up... treasures on earth,” or “store up...treasures in heaven.” (Matthew 6:19-20)

If you “store up for yourselves on earth,” it will be destroyed by rust and moth, and thieves will break in and steal it. However, if you “store up for yourselves treasures in heaven,” moth and rust will not destroy and thieves will not break in and steal.

This passage is not saying that it is sinful to have treasures stored up on earth but what is being stated is that we should not give the storing up of treasures as a prime priority here on earth but instead, invest in The Kingdom of God.

Mathew 6:33 – “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.”

In other words, seek the rule, reign, and righteousness of Christ in your life.

Jesus is admonishing us to seek salvation and, as a result, of seeking salvation, we will have God’s care and provision – His power, His provision, His plans, His purposes

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4 – Time, Talent, Treasure

The issue is not that earthly treasures are inherently bad, but they are of no ultimate value either. If this is the case, then it is wrong for the disciple of Jesus to dedicate his life to continually expanding his earthly treasures.

Storing up treasures on earth can cause frustration and emptiness and can come with a lot of responsibility that the person may not be able to handle.

Heavenly treasures, on the other hand, are everlasting and incorruptible. Treasures in heaven give enjoyment now, in the contentment and sense of well-being that comes from being a giver. But their ultimate enjoyment comes on the other side of eternity.

It has been wisely observed that a moving truck full of possessions never follows a hearse.

Everything one might take with them to the world beyond is left behind. The pharaohs of Egypt were buried with gold and treasures to take into the afterlife, but they left it all behind. Even further, though gold is a precious thing on earth, God uses it to pave the street of heaven.

Revelation 21:21 – “And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.”

Jesus once told a parable that has troubled some. In Luke 16:1-14, Jesus spoke of a dishonest manager, who was about to be called to account. Knowing he would be

fired, he began to settle accounts with his master's debtors at terms favorable to the debtors, so they would treat him kindly when the master fired him.

The master ended up complimenting the manager for his shrewd tactics (presumably before he fired him). This dishonest manager was praise worthy for two reasons –

First, he knew he would be called to account for his life and he took advantage for his life and he took it seriously. Second, he took advantage of his present position to arrange a comfortable future – and we can use our material resources right now for eternal good – even though we cannot bring them with us.

Our material treasures will not pass from this life to the next; but the good that has been done for the kingdom of God through the use of our treasures lasts for eternity, and the work God does in us through faithful giving will last for eternity.

Jesus drew the conclusion that you can only have your treasure (and your heart) in one place; we cannot store up treasure on earth and in heaven at the same time.

1 Timothy 6:7-10 – “For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. 8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with any griefs.”

5 – Time, Talent, Treasure

So, in conclusion, how should a Christian use his/her time, talent, and treasure?

Micah 6:8 – He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you

But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?”

1. Do justice
2. Love kindness (mercy)
3. Walk humbly with God