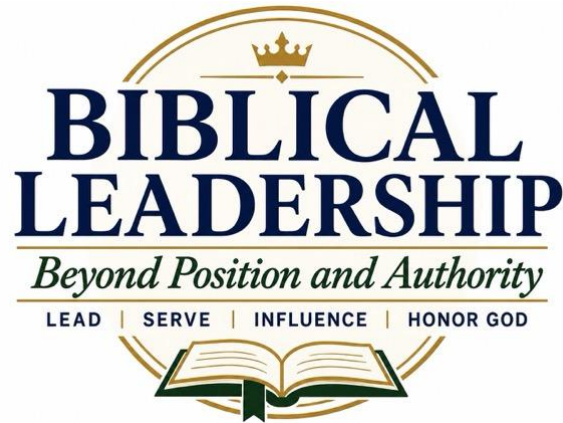




Part 1: Personal Leadership

Lesson 5: Time and Priority Management

In This Lesson

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Time Belongs to God | 4. Interruptions Must Be Managed with Grace |
| 2. Not Every Task Is Equally Important | 5. Deadlines Are Part of Faithfulness |
| 3. Planning Helps Prevent Confusion | 6. Priorities Must Be Reviewed Often |

Lesson Description:

Every leader has the same twenty-four hours in a day, yet some accomplish far more than others because they have learned to manage their time wisely. This lesson will help you understand how to balance responsibilities, respond appropriately to interruptions, and meet deadlines without becoming overwhelmed. You will learn biblical principles for setting priorities, planning ahead, and making wise decisions about where to invest your time and energy. Whether you lead a ministry, a business, a family, or simply desire to be a better steward of your daily responsibilities, this lesson will equip you to use your time in a way that honors God and serves others well.

Good leadership requires wise stewardship of time. A leader cannot do everything, but a faithful leader learns what matters most, plans wisely, handles interruptions with patience, and finishes important work on time.

1. Time Belongs to God

Time is not something we own. It is something God gives us to manage. Every day is a gift, and every hour should be used with wisdom.

A good leader understands that wasted time often becomes wasted opportunity. This does not mean we never rest. Rest is also part of wise time management. It means we should be careful not to live carelessly, always reacting, always rushing, and never thinking ahead.

Example:

A manager comes to work with no plan. By noon, several people have interrupted them, emails have piled up, and the most important task is still untouched. Another manager begins the day with prayer, reviews the most important responsibilities, and blocks time for the work that must be done. Both managers were busy, but only one was managing time wisely.

Supporting Scripture:

- Ephesians 5:15-16, “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”
- Psalm 90:12, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some ways we waste time without realizing it?
2. Why is it important to see time as something God has trusted to us?
3. What is one area where you need to redeem your time better?

2. Not Every Task Is Equally Important

Some tasks are urgent. Some tasks are important. Some tasks are both. A wise leader learns the difference.

If we only respond to what is loudest, we may neglect what matters most. Important work often requires thought, planning, prayer, and focus. These things are easy to push aside because they do not always scream for attention.

Example:

A staff member may have emails, phone calls, and staff questions all happening at once. A manager may have customers, staff scheduling, ordering, and product issues all pressing in. The leader must ask, “What must be handled now? What can wait? What needs to be delegated? What should not be done at all?”

Supporting Scripture:

- Philippians 1:10, “That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ.”
- Luke 10:41-42, “Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful.”

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the difference between urgent and important?
2. What tasks often feel urgent but may not be most important?
3. How can a leader better identify the “one thing needful” in a busy day?

3. Planning Helps Prevent Confusion

Planning does not remove every problem, but it does help reduce confusion. A leader who plans ahead can serve others better.

Poor planning often creates pressure for everyone else. When leaders wait too long, forget details, or change direction too often, the whole team feels it. Good planning brings peace, direction, and confidence.

Example:

If a store sale, ministry mailing, conference, or staff schedule is planned at the last minute, people feel rushed and frustrated. But when the leader plans ahead, communicates clearly, and gives people enough time, the team can work with a better spirit.

Supporting Scripture:

- Proverbs 21:5, “The thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenteousness; but of every one that is hasty only to want.”
- Proverbs 24:27, “Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.”

Discussion Questions:

1. How does poor planning affect a team?
2. What is one area where better planning would help your work?
3. What tools or habits could help you plan more faithfully?

4. Interruptions Must Be Managed with Grace

Interruptions are part of leadership. People have questions. Problems come up. Emergencies happen. A servant leader should not treat people like a bother.

At the same time, not every interruption should control the day. Wise leaders learn to respond with kindness while still protecting time for important work.

Example:

A manager is working on payroll, scheduling, or a deadline. Someone walks in with a question that can wait. The manager can kindly say, “I want to help you with that. I am working on something that has to be finished first. Can we talk at 2:00?” That is not rude. That is wise.

Supporting Scripture:

- Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”
- Ecclesiastes 3:1, “To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.”

Discussion Questions:

1. What kinds of interruptions should be handled right away?
2. What kinds of interruptions can usually wait?
3. How can we protect focused work time without becoming harsh or unkind?

5. Deadlines Are Part of Faithfulness

A deadline is not just a date on a calendar. It is often a promise to someone else. When leaders miss deadlines, others may have to carry the burden.

Faithfulness means doing what we said we would do, when we said we would do it. If we cannot meet a deadline, we should communicate early and honestly.

Example:

If a manager promises to have a schedule ready by Friday, staff may be making family plans around that schedule. If the deadline is missed, it affects more than the manager. It affects the whole team.

Supporting Scripture:

- 1 Corinthians 4:2, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
- Matthew 5:37, “But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do missed deadlines create stress for others?
2. What should a leader do when they realize they cannot meet a deadline?
3. How does keeping deadlines show faithfulness?

6. Priorities Must Be Reviewed Often

Priorities can drift. What mattered most last month may not be what matters most today. Leaders must regularly stop, review, and ask, “Are we still giving our best time to the right things?”

This takes humility. Sometimes a leader must admit, “I have been busy, but not focused.” Other times, a leader must let go of a good thing so they can give attention to a better thing.

Example:

A leader may spend hours on small details while avoiding a hard conversation that needs to happen. A manager may stay busy fixing small problems while failing to train staff. Both are working, but their priorities may need to be adjusted.

Supporting Scripture:

- Haggai 1:5, “Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts; Consider your ways.”
- Proverbs 3:6, “In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do priorities drift over time?
2. What is one good thing that can sometimes keep you from a better thing?
3. How often should a leader review their priorities?

Practical Application

This week, write down your top five responsibilities. Then ask these questions:

1. Which responsibility matters most right now?
2. Which one has a deadline?
3. Which one affects other people the most?
4. Which one can be delegated?
5. Which one needs focused time without interruption?

Then choose one change you will make this week to manage your time and priorities more faithfully.

Closing Thought

A faithful leader does not simply stay busy. A faithful leader seeks God's wisdom, chooses what matters most, plans ahead, handles interruptions with grace, and keeps promises with care.

Good time management is not about doing more things. It is about doing the right things, at the right time, with the right spirit.