

Reflections

HOW MUCH OF YOU
AND YOUR TIME DOES
JESUS HAVE?

*River Road
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REFLECTIVE

Businesses and other enterprises often use a pie chart to illustrate how their budget dollars or other resources are being spent. Each section of the “pie” indicates what percentage of the budget or resource goes to each department or project. Charts such as these can track many other kinds of information. Our computers use them to illustrate how their memory is being used and allocated. Even time use can be graphed using these tools.

If we were to utilize such a chart to indicate how much of our lives are allocated to the various activities and pursuits that utilize our capacity, what would they illustrate? If time spent with family vs. time spent in other efforts were being targeted, what would they show? How about our spiritual lives? Would we find that serving Jesus, reading His Word, praying and helping others was a significant slice of our “pie”? Jesus explains the cost of discipleship when He says... *And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them, ²⁶ If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. ²⁷ And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:25-27)* If we are called to be His disciples, and we are, then how much time should we spend in His Word, His service and in prayer? Shouldn't He be number one?

Let's begin our study by reflecting on how our “time lives” pencil out as we look first at how much of us our children and spouses receive over time. We can start our analysis by calculating the number of hours spent at work. To this we add the times spent focused on our own interests, projects, and other pursuits and we can start to see patterns in how our time is spent. Now let's look at how much time our spouse gets from our schedule. Is it a lot? Typically not. How about the kids? How much personal time do they receive where they and their interests are the topics for consideration? Let's be sure and avoid counting, as this type of personal time, the time spent taking them and their team mates to various activities and sports. It is great that you are part of their life at that level, but when the topics covered in those settings are reviewed they typically do not deal with the most personal and important concerns of our kids. If this is the only time spent with them, how will they learn that you are available for them to come

to for instruction, love and truth, or when they are troubled? How will they too become disciples of Jesus if we don't teach them? This, of course, takes time to do properly.

Having spent a few minutes examining our “family” time, we can now turn our attention to our, and our family's, most important needs and how they are being attended to. We speak here of our spiritual lives and theirs. If our previous efforts at getting at how our time is spent tell us that we are cutting short the best opportunities we will ever have to insure that our responsibility as parents is met in the arena of spiritual training, what can we do to rectify the situation? The Scripture requires a special commitment to teach our kids. *⁴ And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. (Ephesians 6:4 NKJ)* This exhortation requires that we not look for just “quality time” but rather that we realize that time spent in quantity is where “quality time” actually happens.

It seems that each year our families become busier and busier with all kinds of “good” things. Dozens of fun activities, sports, and other events in which to participate can sap a lot more time than we realize. Interestingly, it seems that when our kids grow into adulthood they remember, not so much that we went to their games and activities, though they appreciate that we did, but the memories most discussed seem to be related to those times when they were the objects of our attention. The funny stories, the lessons shared, the skills acquired when we spent time with just them, these become those precious memories that are rehearsed and remembered throughout their lives.

Special occasion cards from our children often remind us that when we spent time healing wounds, discussing spiritual things, giving encouragement, enjoying their victories in life and carrying them through the trials they faced, we were giving them a special legacy. Certainly time better spent than just working or focusing on our own interests. Those prayers that we prayed for their salvation, their future spouses and for their safe journey through the world system, that would like nothing more than to deceive and captivate them, turn out to be time well spent. Our time spent studying the Word gives us wisdom beyond our own while we have our families at home with us. So if we give Jesus *all of ourselves* He will lead us in the proper use of our time and energy. He then becomes the ROCK from whom all of our time is given to us in order to glorify Him in what we do. **Pastor Doug (Colossians 3:17)**