



Time Management

TIME MANAGEMENT

LEVERAGING YOUR LIMITED TIME FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

We manage all sorts of things: money, children, employees, teams, stress, health, projects, change. But the one thing that may be the hardest to manage is time. Effective leaders have learned to manage time well so that all of those other things that need managing, fall into place.

THE CHALLENGE OF MANAGING TIME



Author and speaker Zig Ziglar said, "Lack of direction, not lack of time, is the problem. We all have twenty-four hour days." It's true. No matter how you name it (1 day, 24 hours, 1440 minutes, or even 86,400 seconds), we all have the same time, and time is actually the only thing that is static when it comes to time management. What you do and how you manage that time is fluid.

Time management can seem like a never-ending struggle. There's never enough time to do all the things we want to do. Do you constantly live in an "I wish..." world?

- I wish I had time to exercise.
- I wish I had time to read more.
- I wish I had time to see friends and family more often.
- I wish I had time to take my spouse to dinner.
- I wish I had time to meet my neighbors.
- I wish I had time to pray more.
- I wish I had time to go to my son's baseball game.
- I wish I had time for a hobby.

“
Look carefully then
how you walk, not as unwise
but as wise, making the best
use of the time, because the
days are evil.

Ephesians 5:15-16

Looking at how you manage your time, and being willing to incorporate a few changes, might allow more of the "I wishes" to become "I cans."

ACTION STEP:

What is on your "I wish..." list?

TIME WASTERS

Do you know how you spend your time? Do you really, or do you just think you do? Do you even recognize when you're wasting time?

Think back to yesterday, or last week as a whole, and jot down your best guesses to the following questions:

How often did you pick up your phone to look at social media?	<input type="text"/>	min/day
How many hours of TV did you watch?	<input type="text"/>	hours/day
How many games did you play?	<input type="text"/>	min/day
How many hours did you spend in your car just getting to/from work?	<input type="text"/>	min/day
Look at the search history on your computer. How many of those sites visited were time well spent?	<input type="text"/>	
How many meetings were actually necessary and moved the church's vision forward?	<input type="text"/>	
How many times did you talk about someone else?	<input type="text"/>	
What tasks that you did should have been delegated to someone else?	<input type="text"/>	
How much time did you spend looking for something that, if you were more organized, you would have known where it was to begin with?	<input type="text"/>	min/day
How much time was spent in worry?	<input type="text"/>	min/day

Interesting isn't it? Everyone is busy, but when you really look at your time, are you *actually* busy or do you just *look* busy? Now, convert those minutes and hours into "I wishes." What could you do with the time you wasted if you could have it back?

PRIORITIZING

Have you ever felt like *everything* was important, necessary, and a "must-do"?

Begin each day with a priority checkup. Decide what **MUST** be done, what you would **LIKE** to be done, what can be left until a later time, and what, when you really look at it, doesn't **EVER** have to be done.

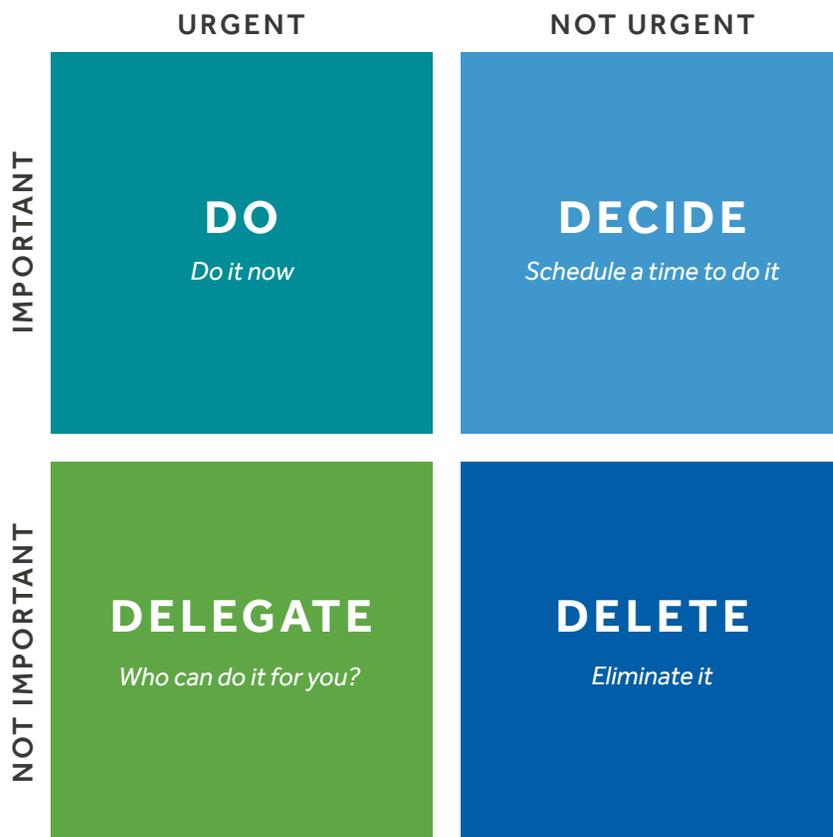
Our 34th president Dwight D. Eisenhower knew how to prioritize. With a presidential-sized to-do list, he had to consider which tasks were of utmost importance and utmost urgency, which he could put aside until later, which he could delegate, and which he could ignore.

“
He who every morning plans
the transactions of that day and
follows that plan carries a thread
that will guide him through the
labyrinth of the most busy life.

Victor Hugo

John Maxwell says, "You cannot overestimate the unimportance of practically everything."

If you're like most, the "Delete" section of the matrix might be the most difficult, but when carefully considered, many "to-dos" really can be turned into "to-don'ts." For example, you're asked to do something (speak at a meeting/conference/class, attend a function, visit or call someone), and these can all be worthwhile endeavors; however, they aren't always. Do they pull you from something more urgent or important? Learn to say "no." No one really understands your time like you do, so don't apologize or feel guilty. Guilt shouldn't be the by-product of a legitimate "no."



The Eisenhower Matrix

ACTION STEP:
 Take a moment and make a "stop doing" list!

TOOLS

"The average person uses 13 different methods to control and manage their time."

WWW.DOVICO.COM/BLOG/2018/03/06/TIME-MANAGEMENT-FACTS-AND-FIGURES

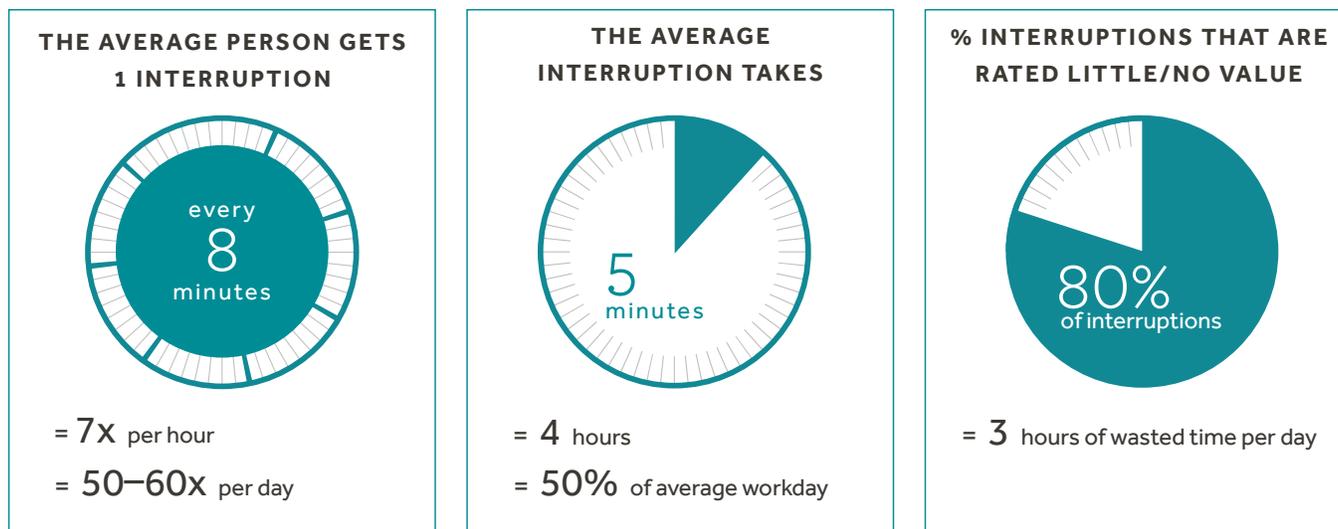
Why is that? Is it a natural tendency to over-compensate with "stuff" we don't need and don't want? How many apps, self-help books, planners, calendars, lists, reminders, virtual and actual assistants do you need? Look at your phone and your desk. There alone, how many time management tools do you have? Do you set alarms to remind you of things? Do you have automatic reminders set up? Are there sticky notes around your office and house? Is your calendar full of events, to-dos, and notifications? Is your management program always at your fingertips, ready for a quick reply, a check of assignments, and a list of today's activities?

It seems that the more tools we have for time management, the less we actually manage well. With all of the offerings, choose wisely. These tools can have an opposite effect, actually being a time waster instead of a saver. Look at what fits your needs and personality, and stick to that.

The same is true of organizational tools and systems. Ask for help if you don't even know where to begin. There are plenty of people who have been granted the gift of organization.

FOCUS

It's possible that your time isn't used as effectively as it could be because of distractions causing a lack of focus.



[Time Management Facts and Figures](#)

Amazing! Three hours of wasted time per day adds up. After all, think of the “I wishes” you could do with an extra 15 hours in a work week!

So how do you diminish these distractions?

1. Find a new space to work. If your current office or usual work space is distracting, move. Is it the stop-over on the way to the coffee machine or restroom? If so, find a quieter, less in-the-traffic area. Offices are often distractions by definition. That's where EVERYTHING is: other staff, reminders of things you haven't done, the church phone. Who can focus in all of that?

Sometimes the busiest places make the best work space. For example, if you can focus with noise around you, find a coffee shop that isn't likely to have everyone from the church and the neighborhood as regular patrons.

2. Turn off your phone. Off. Not on silent. It isn't easy, and it certainly goes against the norm of today, but try it. No dings, blings, rings, bells, or whistles. Try it for an hour, and then ask yourself, “Did I focus more in this hour than I would have with my phone on?”
3. Protect the time. Let others know that this time is reserved for (blank). Whatever it is. If it's important to your work, protect that time. This may be difficult at first since it requires being bold enough to say to others that this is time set aside, but it's worth it.

In fact, schedule an appointment with yourself. Treat this time as just as important as any other important, not-going-to-change-it appointment (like an appointment with the Queen...or the Pope). Your time is important. Treat it as such.

4. Keep your eye on the goal. Always remember why you're doing what you're doing. Don't let the minutiae of life creep into, and distract you from, the goal. Are you working on a sermon? Setting up the annual calendar? Planning the youth retreat? Praying? Whatever the task, keep it at the forefront.

PERSPECTIVE

Keep all of your commitments and responsibilities in perspective. You may not ever actually have or take the time to learn Japanese, plan all of the programs, or be city champ in your tennis league, but what if you took 15 minutes out of your day to accept a tea party invitation from your daughter? Would it ruin your day and your schedule? Probably not. But it just might make lasting memories for a five-year-old. Put the things that come your way in perspective. What might seem urgent and very important, may not be after all.

ACTION STEP:

Ask a third party to review your priorities. Someone who has no emotional attachment to your to-dos and schedule could quickly identify some things that simply don't need to be there and help answer the question, **"What, if anything, would happen if this didn't get done?"**

“ You get to decide where your time goes. You can either spend it moving forward or you can spend it putting out fires. You decide. And if you don't decide, others will decide for you.

Tony Morgan

ASK GOD

Have you ever asked God if He's happy with your schedule or the way you spend your time? Ephesians 5 tells us to "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil" (5:15-16). No amount of self-reflection, tools, prioritizing, or planning are wise if you haven't heard from God about how your time should be spent – work time, family time, free time, all of it.

WANT
MORE?

Try the Matrix

Take your to-do lists (work and personal) and put each item in the correct matrix box. Then, prioritize those. Does this help you see what should monopolize your time the most?

Consider Your Time-Wasters

Think back over the potential time wasters. Which one is your biggest threat? Try to go one week without doing that particular thing. Did you find time for an "I wish"?

Read These Books

For further reading on this topic, check out *Make Time: How to Focus on what Matters Every Day* by Jake Knapp and John Zeratsky, and *Deep Work* by Cal Newport (Church Fuel has a Book Breakdown on this one). Log into your Church Fuel account to find a Book Breakdown for *Deep Work* with lessons from the book, ministry insights, and more.



Q&A

with Ryan Brooks

LEAD PASTOR OF VERTICAL CHURCH
AND CHURCH FUEL MINISTRY COACH



What do you do when there's too much to do?

When I have too many things to do, I first stop and decide on the things that only I can do. One of the biggest challenges that I have as a leader is that I easily allow things that I don't have to do to get on my list of things to do. Second, I ask myself if the things that only I can do are things that I *absolutely* have to do or things that I like doing that make me feel better. I often find myself doing things that are more gratifying to me personally but not moving the needle forward for the Church and that is tough. Third, I try to find people who can pick up my slack and delegate. If no one can be found it will be pushed back another week.

What are your biggest time wasters and how do you combat them?

Social media can be a huge time waster for me. I like connecting with our church family through social media, but like many things, when it is out of control it can be dangerous. I can slip into watching other ministries or pastors that ultimately leads to comparison, and it is just a dangerous road.

Also, meetings that turn into social events can be time wasters. I try to get to the order of business first and catch up on personal stuff last. It helps to ensure that our meetings are more productive.

To combat these things I literally schedule my time on social media to give me some guardrails on my time. When I schedule any meeting, I have a start time and stop time that helps me keep things focused. I don't leave any appointment open-ended.

What tools do you use to effectively manage your time?

This may sound silly, but it has worked for me: I use a timer/countdown quite often. I can let my work overflow into other things that I wanted to get done in the day. Simply put, I set a timer on my watch or phone for a specific amount of time. I focus for that time, and when the timer goes off I stop no matter where I am with that project. I have even used this in meetings to let myself and others know that I have given this all I can afford today.

If I am not done with that project or meeting, I immediately schedule the next time I am going to come back to the project or person. I also go ahead and plan a certain amount of time to it then.

I literally put everything on my calendar. It has been a super helpful thing. I read once that most people do the same 15 things in a week; if so, those things should be on your calendar.

TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix (EDM)

For years this practical, hands-on tool has helped leaders and their team members engage with tasks and workplace demands in a way that doesn't force compromise on the things that really matter. So how can we create freedom in our schedules and feel good about it? Organize your tasks by prioritizing them appropriately using this matrix.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	DO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare sermon notes • Pay church utility bill • Call Sarah's soccer coach • Answer volunteer email inquiry • Google best bubble machine • Clean out coat closet 	DECIDE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email Associate Pastor



Urgent and important

Tasks to **DO** immediately

Ask: What should I focus on first?

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
NOT IMPORTANT	DELEGATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Window shop • Meet with Children's Director • Take child to the E.R. 	DELETE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work out • Eat lunch • Call wife • Communicate meeting time change • Rest • Pay guest speaker



Important, but not urgent

Tasks you can **DECIDE** to do later

Ask: When should I plan to get this done?

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

This example shows a few common misconceptions for where certain tasks should fall in the quadrants of the matrix.

PROPER EMPHASIS

In this example, demands, tasks and priorities are given proper emphasis and the things that matter to you are given space to be done as well.

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
IMPORTANT	DO <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare sermon notes • Communicate meeting time change • Take child to the E.R. 	DECIDE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work out • Eat lunch • Call wife • Rest • Email Associate Pastor • Meet with Children's Director



Urgent, but not important

Tasks to **DELEGATE** to someone else

Ask: Who can do this for me?

	URGENT	NOT URGENT
NOT IMPORTANT	DELEGATE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer volunteer email inquiry • Pay church utility bill • Pay guest speaker 	DELETE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Sarah's soccer coach • Window shop • Google best bubble machine • Clean out coat closet



Not urgent or important

Tasks that you can **DELETE**

Ask: Can I eliminate this completely?

TIME MANAGEMENT WORKSHEET

The Eisenhower Decision Matrix (EDM)

