

The Leader's Time II

March 29, 2007

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We are dealing with a five step process on investing our time wisely as opposed to simply spending our time, or worse yet, wasting our time. In a previous issue we covered having a Christ-centered power and a compelling purpose. Now we move on to contagious passion, clear priorities and careful pacing.

Contagious Passion

An old Mississippi preacher prayed before he began his sermon. "Lord, give your servant the eye of the eagle and the wisdom of the owl. Illuminate my brow with the sun of heaven. Possess my mind with love for the people. Turpentine my imagination, grease my lips, electrify my brain with the lightning of the Word. Fill me plumb full of the dynamite of Your glory. Anoint me all over with the kerosene of salvation and set me on fire."

Now that's passion. I'd love to hear that ole boy preach! It reminds me of John Wesley's response as to why so many people came to listen to him. "I ask God to light me on fire and people like to come out and watch me burn." Passion is intense emotion, compelling action, a strong devotion to some object, activity, or concept. I believe that passion should find its source in a Christ-centered power and a God-given purpose.

When He is at the center of who I am and I have a purpose born out of my relationship with Him, I should be excited and on fire about who I am and what I am doing. Passion is like a mighty river flowing from the ocean of God cutting through difficult terrain and blazing new trails that have never been trodden before. Passion is the energy of the soul. How do you develop passion? Spend time around passionate people either in person or through books, seminars and tapes. Ask God to set you on fire. Spend plenty of time with Him in prayer and worship. Develop a compelling purpose that gets you excited.

Clear Priorities

If God is the ocean from which the river of our passion flows and if the direction of our river of passion is honed by our God-given purpose, then priorities are the banks of the river. I believe that priorities protect our passion and purpose as the banks of a river keep it from becoming a placid lake instead of a forceful river. Priorities help us be pro-active not reactive. Priorities help us special order from the menu rather than fill our plates with everything on the buffet table. Take time to order well to keep the river flowing correctly. Priorities are the things I decide to do that are in line with my purpose and passion. Priorities are the choices I make day in and day out investing who I am, not just spending or wasting who I am. It has been my experience that spending large amounts of time and resources on things that are not directly related to passion and purpose will sap my energy and rob me of my joy.

Each day I sit before God asking Him for direction. What things should I be doing that will be a reflection of purpose and passion? What things will enable me to make my

unique contribution? Yes, it is the age-old idea of a “do” list. But a “do” list birthed by purpose and passion. A “do” list that is carefully and prayerfully composed, not reactively responding to whatever screams the loudest. A “do” list resulting in significance not merely survival

Careful Pacing

Priorities protect my purpose and passion, and pacing prolongs my purpose and passion so the river doesn't run dry. I don't want to show up in heaven ahead of schedule and discover that my mansion is not ready yet. A number of years ago. I had a friend who often said that he was burning the candle at both ends and praying for more wax. I used to ask people how they were doing and often heard, “Busy, really busy.” Now I hear, “Tired, really tired.”

As a culture and as leaders we don't do very well at pacing ourselves. (see a previous article on “Pacing the Race.” Someone has said that things are so crazy that we are now paying somebody to smell the roses for us. Do you take time to rest when you need it? Do you take regular days off? Do you get the amount of sleep you desperately need? Are you moving too fast? Does the Lord have to run to keep up with you? Are you honking at your own taillight in the traffic of life?

Here are four easy action items that will make an immense difference:

1. Slow down
2. Say “no”
3. Simplify
4. Seek solitude

To be a leader who invests time wisely is a matter of Christ-centered power to give me the energy I need. A compelling purpose to give me the direction I need. A contagious passion to give me the excitement I need. Clear priorities to give me the focus I need. Careful pacing to give me the balance I need. How are you doing, fellow traveler? Are you spending wasting or investing the time of your life?