

PUNCTUALITY vs. SELF-INDULGENCE

DEMONSTRATING THE WORTH OF PEOPLE AND TIME BY ARRIVING FOR APPOINTMENTS BEFORE THEY BEGIN

Motivation to make the most of every minute comes by realizing how short life truly is. James 4:14 says, “For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” Punctuality is respecting the time of others. My five-minute delay means that each one waiting for me loses five minutes of irreplaceable time. C. H. Spurgeon put it this way; “I ought not to insult any one by supposing that his or her time is worth nothing, and the he or she is a nobody, who may as well wait for me as not.”

Punctuality is saying “yes” to wise planning and “no” to delightful distractions. Psalm 90:12 says, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.” Time-management trainer Rick Grubbs stated it this way; “Time is the passing of life. Redeeming the time means rescuing it from going to waste.”

Time is a valuable asset that is multiplied when we give the first part back to God (Proverbs 3:9-10). Time is like a coupon; it does nothing for us until we exchange it for something of value. We get the most value for it when we invest it in eternal treasures.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PUNCTUALITY

Punctuality is based on two important factors. The first is a reverence for time, and the second is a respect for other people. Punctuality is being present, prepared, and alert for appointed times and seasons. Being punctual is living in harmony with the nature of God (who is always precisely on time). Failing to be punctual hinders God’s purposes in our lives and offends those who are then forced to wait for us. People tend to count the faults of those who keep them waiting. The longer they wait, the more faults they find.

THE REVERENCE FOR TIME

We are to reverence time, because God created it. He created days, nights, weeks, months, and years. He also established seasons of the year and seasons of life. God designed the day for work and the night for rest. He wants us to make full use of every day and finish one week’s work in six days. We are then to honor Him with “the first fruits of all our increase,” including the first portion of a paycheck, the first part of the day, and the first day of the week.

If you have not been punctual toward God, consider the Word of the Lord, “Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” (James 4:17). Confess your sins to God, and write out the steps you plan to take to establish punctuality before the Lord.

Personal Evaluation – How punctual are you toward God?

- Do you meet God punctually each morning for prayer and reading Scripture?
- Do you go to bed early so that you can get up early?
- Do you arrive for church early so that you are ready at the appointed time?
- Do you tithe punctually?
- Do you quickly do all you can to meet a need that God brings to your attention?
- Do you seize opportunities to share the Gospel as God directs you?

A RESPECT FOR PEOPLE

The second factor required for punctuality is a respect for other people and the time God has entrusted to them. Time is one of our most precious assets. We are given a limited amount of it and are accountable to God for how we use it.

When we keep other people waiting, we actually rob them of their time and hinder them from accomplishing God's will. We fail to obey the command to "walk circumspectly...Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:15-16), We also fail to comprehend the truth of the following quote:

***"Lost yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes; no reward is offered, for they are forever gone."* ~ Horace Mann**

If you have robbed others of time by your lack of punctuality, make a list of those whom you have wronged and ask for their forgiveness. Fulfill the promises that you have made to others, and design ways for others to hold you accountable for punctuality. Make this a priority until punctuality is a consistent discipline in your life.

Personal Evaluation – How punctual are you toward others?

- Do you arrive punctually for mealtimes and other family gatherings?
- Do you arrive early at your place of employment?
- Do you keep appointments that you make with others?
- Do you promptly pay your bills?
- Do you write thank-you letters and notes in a timely fashion?
- Do you punctually return books and other items that you borrow?
- Do you fulfill the promises you have made to others?

RELATED CHARACTER QUALITIES NECESSARY FOR PUNCTUALITY

Orderliness – Organizing our lives and surroundings so that we can be on time

Creativity – Designing more efficient ways to accomplish tasks so as to be on time

Initiative – Taking the lead in doing what needs to be done in order to be punctual

Patience – Forgiving the lack of punctuality in others