



The Damage of a Hectic Pace



Work SnapShot

Laura sat at the desk in her hotel room—blankly staring at her laptop. From the world's point of view, she had it all. She was a successful sales rep who had won numerous awards. She was the proud mom of two beautiful, well-adjusted children and the wife of a husband who adored her. And she even made time for serving at church and helping coach her daughter's soccer team. It all looked great—so why was she sitting in a distant town, wondering if this was all there was to life?

Her mind went back to her sales rep interview process three years earlier. When asked what her priorities were, she surprised herself with the ease at which she answered: "My first priority is my relationship with God. If that is in line, then all my other priorities fall into place." After she

responded, she wondered if that had cost her the job. Evidently not, because she was hired.

But now, Laura was revisiting her highest priority she had so bravely shared three years earlier. As she painfully worked through her personal reality check, she came to the conclusion that in spite of her best efforts and desire to do "it all" she had allowed that first priority to slide. It wasn't intentional. In fact, she had not recognized the gradual shifting of the order until that very moment of introspection.

Now came the hard part! How could she get her priorities back in proper order? Would she have to do away with some of her obligations? They were all actually "good things."

What advice would you share with Laura?



In Depth

As you prepare for this study, complete the following:

SCRIPTURE PATH

Ephesians 5:15 – 17

Ecclesiastes 3:1 – 14

List the times in the past week that you've read your Bible.

List the times this past week you've read a newspaper or other periodical.

List the times this past week you've read a book.

List the times this week you've spoken with or listened to God in prayer.

List the times this week you've talked to others about God.

If you're a parent, list the times you've spoken to your children about God.

During this past week, how many meaningful conversations did you have with your spouse, family members and close friends?

What conclusions do you draw from your answers above?



Studies show us that the more educated we are, and the more successful we are, the less likely we are to know God's Word. Why do you think that's true?

Remembering our study of the Israelites, what's the problem with being unfamiliar with God's Word?

Question to Consider:

List some of the things and people that place demands on your time.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Why do you surrender it to them?

- _____
- _____

Read Ephesians 5:15 – 17. In regards to these verses, rate on a scale of 1 – 10 "how you live" in reference to:

- a. Keeping the connection with God? _____ Why did you give yourself that rating?
- b. Keeping connection with family? _____ Why did you give yourself that rating?



In verse 16, “making the most of every opportunity” represents a marketing term which meant “to buy out something completely” at a good time or price. In other words, believers are to take advantage of every spiritual opportunity. What are some specific ways you could “make the most of every opportunity” and increase your rating in:

- a. Connecting better with God?
- b. Connecting better with family?

Now read Ecclesiastes 3:1 – 14. What do you think Solomon wants us to hear in this passage?

“Ecclesiastes points out two important lessons from this understanding of time. First, there is a proper time for every event and our purpose is to discover our role—doing the right thing at the right time brings incredible fulfillment. Second, we are wired to want to see the whole as evidenced in art, science, theology, etc. However, when we cut ourselves off from God we are left to journey from day to day with little clear direction as we cannot see the whole on our own. To connect back into the big picture we need to ask, ‘Lord, what would you have me do now? I know my life has an eternal purpose, and I desire to understand how all things work together for good.’”

— Darryl Shoemaker, Ph.D, *The Work Schedule*